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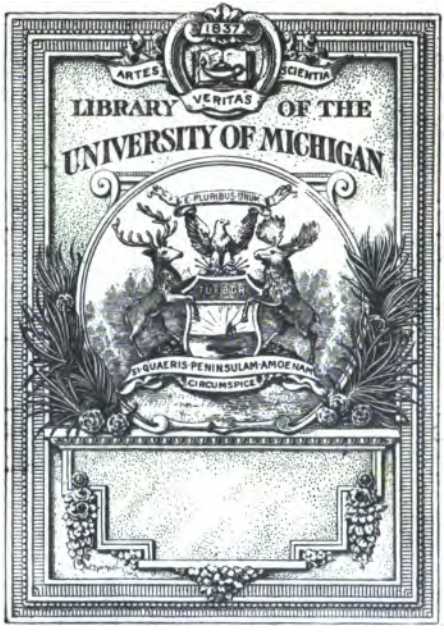

THE GIFT OF
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THE THEORY AND DESIRABLENESS OF REVIVALS.

THE

THEORY AND DESIRABLENESS

OF

REVIVALS,

BEING

SIX SERMONS,

BY

THE REV. ALBERT BARNES,
OF NEW YORK,

1798-1870

WITH

A PREFACE,

BY THE

HON. & REV. BAPTIST WRIOTHESLEY NOEL, M.A.

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It is believed that the friends of revivals will perform an important service to the church and to the world, by giving to this work an extensive circulation.

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PREFACE.

THE cities of Great Britain are exercising an influence upon the whole country which, being already great, is likewise annually increasing. By their augmenting trade and commerce they attract the surplus population of the counties who are unable to find employment in their native fields, and by the rewards which they offer to industry and talent draw to themselves the keenest intellects of the kingdom. Thus peopled they have become the seats of literature, the magazines of art, the fortresses of liberty, the schools of political science, and the busy hives of the most skilful artisans in the world.

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Among them the metropolis has the undisputed pre-eminence. Statesmen and nobles, profound lawyers, and shrewd merchants, giants of literature and science, and the able editors of powerful journals, in perpetual intercourse and collision sharpen each other's minds and form the nation's creed in politics, in commerce, and in taste. Hence issues a flood of knowledge over the land; and hither from every corner of the country do numbers flock either to form for themselves a metropolitan home, or to transact the business which connects this city with every country and city of the empire, so that its influence is felt from the shore of Caithness to the Land's End. Nay, it is felt through the whole world. Thousands of foreigners reside here for business or pleasure. Italians and Poles, whose liberty has been beaten down and trampled in the dust in their own lands, here breathe the air of freedom; Germans and French are prosecuting among us their gainful trades; Spaniards

are driven here by their intestine dissensions, or come to study the principles of our constitution; and even the Brahmins and Parsees of India, Egyptians, Greeks, and Syrians gather to this centre of civilization to seek the knowledge which they may employ for their own purposes, or impart to their countrymen at home.

Imagine that this vast city were under the dominant influence of the Gospel, containing a moral and religious population, in which temperance and purity, justice and benevolence were cherished by the absolute subjection of the people to the Word of God, and their diligent use of the means of grace, its talent, learning, and wealth would all be consecrated to the highest purposes; and those who should visit it from the country or from foreign lands, would exclaim as they felt its moral and religious influence upon their spirits, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

But its real condition little answers to

this picture. For its wealth and industry, its knowledge and refinement, we may well exult in it; its palaces surpass those of Babylon and Rome; the masts of its merchantmen in the river form a forest scarcely less dense and extensive than those which Cæsar found on the banks of the same river, when he attacked our naked and painted ancestors with his legions. In morals likewise and religious knowledge, it may bear a comparison with any of the capitals of Europe, and the stranger who sees on the Sabbath its closed shops, its quiet streets, and its decent throngs crowding to its various places of worship, might think it to be a city of church-goers.

But frightful features may lie hid under a glittering veil. Could all the ungodliness and vice of London be gathered into one distinct and separate district, where gin shops and theatres, gambling houses, tea gardens and gaols, should preside over dreary streets filled with infidels and profligates of

every description, perhaps no city in the world could exhibit so extensive an accumulation of intense and unmitigated irreligion. Yet to this company thousands of young persons are coming annually from every county to obtain employment in shops and families; numbers of whom, it is to be feared, are speedily ruined in their principles by the innumerable incentives to vice which are obtruded on their notice. What is there on the other hand to lead them to the principles and habits of true religion? If they happen to be thrown among consistent Christians, they may doubtless find instruction and improvement; but for the most part they are either left entirely to themselves, or soon find out that the influence of their employers and companions is hostile to religion. The ministers of religion are disproportionate to the wants of the community, and their ministry is paralyzed by the circumstances under which they are placed. There is far less of pastoral inter-

course among clergymen and their congregations than is desirable; and beyond their congregations their influence is but slightly felt. Myriads of immortal beings round us are living and dying without the semblance even of religion; and their children are growing up in their habits. An excellent police, aided by the military force and by capacious gaols, maintains an extraordinary degree of public order; but the want of principle to be found among multitudes in close alliance with drunkenness and want, is scarcely on that account less melancholy. By various enquiries I am led to believe that an immense majority of the operatives of London attend no place of worship, and are living without any public or domestic exercises of religion.

A church may be erected near them, and a flourishing congregation may be gathered within its walls, but it exercises no perceptible influence on them; they do not attend its worship, they never see its minister, and

are profoundly indifferent to its existence. In some few cases neighbourhoods have been improved by an effective ministry, but these instances are exceptions to the general rule. The public ministrations of the Establishment seem to me hardly to touch that portion of the community which is without the forms of religion; and I am inclined to think that this remark applies almost equally to the ministers of other denominations. On the other hand, this defect is not adequately remedied by the zeal of laymen. In very few instances do masters call their workmen together for reading and prayer; and the young men who are attached to great shops receive little guidance from their employers; who, provided they do the work assigned to them, are said to care very little whether they be moral or immoral, devout or profane.

Something has been done to disseminate a knowledge of the Gospel by the various associations for visiting the poor, and the

agents of the London City Mission have been pre-eminently useful in imparting religious knowledge to numbers of persons who were previously living in a total neglect of the means of grace. But they carry on their work under great disadvantages; the population which they instruct being so fluctuating that the influence of neighbourhood is scarcely known; and with respect to numbers, the missionary has continually to begin his labours afresh. Besides which, years of criminal excess, an habitual insensibility to all religious truths, oppressive cares and hopeless poverty, render many of the objects of his solicitude as impervious to religious feeling as almost any class which could be imagined. Perhaps these excellent men do more for the instruction of the poorest classes than any others: but much more powerful means must be devised before the metropolis can take its proper place as the centre of moral and religious influence to the British empire and to the world. To accomplish

this object, there must be a great increase of true religion through all grades of society, and therefore there must be a simultaneous increase of Christian influence upon old and young, upon rich and poor. The ministers of Christ cannot accomplish this alone: to act upon myriads who are without religious principle, the thousands who possess it must do their utmost. "*Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world,*" said our Saviour,—not to his ministers alone, but to his disciples. Accordingly, what is mainly required for London, is an increase of spiritual religion among the true followers of Christ, with a corresponding sense of the obligation laid on each of them to enlarge and strengthen the kingdom of the Redeemer. Much zeal has been lately employed in the endeavour to multiply our sacred buildings and to increase the number of ministers; but has there been equal care taken respecting their qualifications? The clergymen mentioned by St. Paul, in his

Second Epistle to the Corinthians, who corrupted their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ, however regularly ordained—for he alleged no irregularity against them, —were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ," and "ministers of Satan" transformed into the appearance of ministers of righteousness." 2 Cor. xi. 3, 12—15, 23. Hence we may judge that the value of ministers depends, not upon any supposed apostolical succession, but upon the soundness of their doctrine and their personal piety; and those who aid in the erection of buildings for worship, should also take care to secure pious ministers to officiate in them. The metropolis moreover, exercising such an influence upon the nation, and concentrating within itself much of the talent and learning of the whole community, ought to have the ablest as well as the best ministers which the country can afford; and some plan should be devised by which the Christians of the

metropolis may secure to themselves this blessing. Statesmen and lawyers and men of scientific attainment ought to find in the ministers of their various neighbourhoods men whose ability they are obliged to respect, and whose strong sense, apparent in their expositions and applications of the Word of God may furnish suitable aliment for the most powerful and the most cultivated minds. Is it impossible for religious men in London to devise some method by which they may accomplish this object? The metropolis, pre-eminent in everything else, deserves to enjoy this pre-eminence also. But to whatever extent we may suppose able and excellent ministers to be multiplied, they must ever need all the aid which their congregations can afford them in their evangelical labours. Christians have not yet realised their responsibility. All the early Christians preached Christ to the ignorant (Acts viii. 1—4); and when a congregation leave their minister to labour alone for the

spiritual instruction of the neighbourhood, it is as though a regiment, in presence of the enemy, should leave their commander to accomplish their defence, while they reserved their own strength to provide forage for their horses and quarters for themselves. Till a combined effort is made by all who have piety, talent, and education, to convert the ungodly, we cannot expect the mass of society to be awakened to a sense of religion. As God uses suitable means for the accomplishment of his ends, we cannot expect him to add daily to the church such as shall be saved, till we see the whole body of Christ's disciples manifesting that diligence, fervour, and brotherly kindness, which, under God, led to this result in the primitive church. (Acts ii. 41, &c.) Nothing but an extensive revival of personal religion among real Christians of every denomination, is likely to effect any great improvement in the mass of society. But is this impossible? Is all spiritual vigour and all faith so extin-

guished in contests about church rates and establishments, &c., &c., that Christians have ceased to hope for great blessings from God? Only let us ask the pardon of our provocation in the name of Christ, and mourn that our divisions and our worldliness, our sloth and want of prayer has given occasion to the deadly tractarianism which, destitute as it is of all scriptural support, yet seems likely to destroy so many unstable souls; and then we may remember that he is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. Instead of timidly concluding that the evils of vice and infidelity on the one hand, or the opposite mischiefs of formalism and of priestly assumption on the other, must irresistibly advance and triumph, let each Christian determine in the strength of God that he will do what he can to promote pure and vital godliness. All solid reformation must begin in the spiritual improvement of true Christians. No longer looking to the government of the

country or the prelates of the establishment to accomplish what is beyond their power, let each Christian first earnestly seek to grow in grace, and then labour to effect a revival of religion in the metropolis, as if its spiritual renovation depended upon him alone. But as ungodly men combine to oppose the Word of God or to pervert it, let Christians of every denomination combine to uphold its authority. Once united as a holy, devoted, and prayerful brotherhood,—allowing to each other the rights of conscience, and liberty to pay implicit obedience to the Word of God, they would speedily extinguish beneath a mountain of merited odium the revived doctrines of Laud, and obtain still more important victories over ungodliness, ignorance, and vice.

The author of the following work, though occasionally employing expressions with which the reader may not concur, has depicted in a powerful manner the duty of the Christian inhabitants of large cities

to accomplish such a general reformation as has been above described; and few persons can seriously read his pages without feeling impelled to be more fervent in prayer, and more active in doing good.

SERMON I.

THE THEORY OF REVIVALS.

"DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS, FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES POUR DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: LET THE EARTH OPEN, AND LET THEM BRING FORTH SALVATION, AND LET RIGHTEOUSNESS SPRING UP TOGETHER." Isa. xlv. 8.

THIS beautiful passage of scripture may be regarded partly as the expression of pious feeling, and partly as a prophetic description. It is the language of one who greatly desired an increase of piety, and who was accustomed to look forward to times when pure religion would shed abroad its influence on earth like descending showers from heaven. This prophet, more than any other one, fixed his eye on the times of the Redeemer, and he delighted to describe scenes which would occur when he should appear. With deep interest he threw himself amidst those future scenes, and with a heart full of faith he uttered the language of our text, "Pour down, ye heavens, from above like descending showers, and ye skies distil

righteousness like fertilizing rains; let the earth open her bosom, and let salvation spring forth as an abundant harvest."

From these words I propose to commence a series of discourses on REVIVALS OF RELIGION. Several considerations have induced me to enter on the discussion of this subject. One is, that they are the most remarkable phenomena of our times, and that they have done more than any other single cause to form the public mind in this country. Large portions of the community have been shaken to their centre by these religious movements: and society has received some of its most decided directions from these deep and far pervading revolutions.

Another reason is, that every Christian has the deepest interest in the question about revivals of religion. If they are the genuine work of God; if they accord with the statements in the Bible; if they are such results as he has a right to expect under the preaching of the Gospel, he is bound, by all the love which he bears to his Saviour and to the souls of men, to desire and pray for their increase and extension.

Another reason is, that there are many various and contradictory opinions in regard to these religious movements. It is not wonderful that, in

a community where every thing is subjected to free discussion, and every man is at liberty to form his own judgment, they should have given rise to great variety of opinion. By some they are regarded as the mere work of enthusiasm. By some they are supposed to be originated by a strain of preaching, and an array of measures adapted to operate on easily-excited feelings, and fitted to influence only the weaker portions of the community, and to be unworthy the attention of the more refined and intelligent ranks of society. By others they are considered to be in accordance with all the laws of mind; regarded as having a foundation in the very nature of christianity in its adaptedness to the world; as produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and as connected with the best hopes of mankind. Even among professed Christians it cannot be denied that some look upon them with distrust and alarm; others regard them as the glory of the age, and as identified with all that is cheering in the prospect of the conversion of the world to God. Some see in them the last hope of this republic against a tide of ills that is rolling in with rapid and desolating surges upon us; and some regard them as among the ills which religion, unsupported by the state, has produced in a country where all is wild,

and free even to licentiousness. Perhaps there is scarcely any excitement of the public mind that has produced a deeper attention; none that can by a Christian or a patriot be regarded as of higher moment, or as more likely to affect the best interests of man. The friend of revivals regards it as a fact of deep interest, that scarcely a village smiles upon the American landscape that has not been consecrated in early history by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in a revival of religion. He discerns in the spire that points to heaven, proof that that is a place perhaps more than once honoured by the presence of Israel's God. He sees in the reigning order, peace and prosperity, proofs that the power of God has been felt there. He finds in its schools, its industry, its morals, its benevolence, demonstration that Christianity there has struck its roots deep in some mighty work of God's Spirit, and, as the result, is sending out branches bending with rich and mellow fruits. He can recall there some thrilling period in its history when a spirit of prayer and seriousness gave its character to the growing village, and when, under the influence of such a revival, a moulding hand was extended over all the social habits of the place. If such is their influence, it is an act of mere justice that

Christianity should not be deprived of the claims which it has on the gratitude of the nation; it is a duty which we owe to ourselves and our country to understand and to appreciate causes, so deeply affecting our welfare.

There is one other reason why I propose to bring this subject before you, and indeed the main reason which has operated on my mind in doing it; it is, whether it is to be expected that such scenes will be witnessed in large cities and towns, or whether there are in the very nature of a city population insuperable obstacles to the existence of revivals of religion there. It is certain that in our own land they have occurred much more frequently in the comparatively quiet retreats of the country; and that such scenes as are characteristically known as revivals of religion are scarcely known in large cities like the one wherein we dwell. Knowing as we do the effect which cities must have, and do have, on religion, the chastity, the temperance, the intelligence, and the liberty of a nation; and knowing as we do the ten thousand obstacles which exist there to the promotion of true religion, it is a question of deep interest whether Christians are to expect now, in such places, scenes like that on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. It is with main reference to

this inquiry that I have commenced this course of lectures; and my general plan will be, TO STATE THE NATURE OF A REVIVAL OF RELIGION; TO CONSIDER THE RELATION OF REVIVALS TO THIS COUNTRY; TO SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING RELIGION IN CITIES; TO SHOW WHAT IS THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF CITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THIS INQUIRY; TO CONSIDER WHETHER REVIVALS MAY BE EXPECTED TO OCCUR IN CITIES; AND TO SHOW THE DESIRABLENESS OF SUCH WORKS OF GRACE THERE.

The following things will express what is meant by a revival of religion; or the following truths are essential elements in the theory of such a revival:—

1. There may be a radical and permanent change in a man's mind on the subject of religion. This change it is customary to express by the word regeneration, or the new birth. It supposes that, before this, man is entirely alienated from God, and that he first begins to love him when he experiences this change. The previous state is one of sin; the subsequent is a state of holiness. The former is death; the latter is life. The former is the agitation of a troubled sea, which cannot rest; the latter calm-

ness, peace, joy. This change is the most thorough through which the human mind ever passes. It effects a complete revolution in the man, and his opposite states are characterized by words that express no other states in the human mind. This change is instantaneous. The exact moment may not be known, and the previous seriousness and anxiety may be of longer or shorter continuance; but there *is* a moment when the heart is changed, and when the man that was characteristically a sinner becomes characteristically a Christian. This change is always attended with feeling. The man is awakened to a sense of his danger; feels with more or less intensity that he is a sinner; resolves to abandon his sins and seek for pardon; is agitated with conflicts of greater or less intensity on giving up his sins; finds greater or feebler obstacles in his way; and at last resolves to cast himself on the mercy of God in the Redeemer, and to become a Christian. The result is, in all cases, permanent peace and joy. It is the peace of the soul when pardon is pronounced on the guilty, and when the hope of immortal glory first dawns on a benighted mind. It may be beautifully illustrated by the loveliness of the landscape when the sun at evening breaks out after a tempest; or by the

calmness of the ocean as it subsides after the storm. In the fact that such a change may occur, all Christians agree; in such a change is laid the whole theory of a revival of religion. Let many sinners simultaneously turn to God; let conversions to Christ, instead of being few and far between, become numerous, rapidly occurring, and decided in their character, and you have all that is usually meant when we speak of *revivals*, so far as *conversions* are concerned. Still these are all individual conversions, accomplished in each case by the Holy Spirit, and in exact accordance with the design of the Gospel, and evincing its glory. Each one is converted in the same way, by the same truth, by the same great agent, the Holy Spirit, as though he were alone, and not another mind had been awakened or converted. It is the conversion of a number of *individuals* from sin to holiness, and from Satan unto God. Look on the heavens in a clear night, and you will have an illustration of what we mean. The stars that are set in that broad zone of light which stretches over the firmament—the milky way,—are single stars, each subject to its own laws, moving in its sphere, glorious, probably, in its own array of satellites; but their rays meet and mingle—not less beauti-

ful because the light of millions is blended together. Alone, they all show God's power and wisdom; blended, they evince the same power and wisdom when he groups all their beauties and wonders into one. So in conversion from sin to God. Take the case of a single true conversion to God, and extend to a community—to *many* individuals passing through that change, and you have all the theory of a revival of religion. It is bringing together many conversions; arresting simultaneously many minds; perhaps condensing into a single place, and into a few weeks, the ordinary work of many distant places and many years.

The essential fact is, that a sinner may be converted by the agency of the Spirit of God from his sins. The same power which changes him, *may* change others also. Let substantially the same views, and feelings, and changes, which exist in the case of the individual, exist in the case of others; let a deep seriousness pervade a community, and a spirit of prayer be diffused there; let the ordinary haunts of pleasure and vice be forsaken for the places of devotion, and you have the theory, so far as I know, of a revival of religion.

2. The second fact is, that there may be times

in the life of a Christian of unusual peace and joy. To whatever it may be owing, it will be assumed as a fact—for the truth of which I now depend on an appeal to the Christian's own feelings—that there *are* times in his life of far more than usual elevation in piety; times, when his "peace is like a river," and his love to God and man "like the waves of the sea." There are times when he feels an irresistible longing for communion with God; when the breath of praise is sweet; when every thing seems to be full of God; when all his feelings prompt him to devotion; and when he becomes so impressed with the great truths of Christianity, and filled with the hope of heaven, that he desires to live only for God and for the skies. Earthly objects lose their lustre in his view; their brightest, gayest colours fade away; and an insatiable panting of soul leads him away from these to hold communion with the Redeemer. A light, pure, tranquil, constant, is shed on all the truths of religion, and the desire of the salvation of children, partners, parents, friends, of the church and of the world, enchains all the affections. Then to pray is easy, and to converse with Christians and with sinners is easy, and the prospect of boundless wealth and of the brightest

honours would be gladly exchanged for the privilege of converting and saving a single soul.

When this occurs in a church, and these feelings pervade any considerable portion of the people of God, there is a revival of religion so far as the church is concerned. Let Christians, as a body, live manifestly under the influence of their religion; let a feeling of devotion pervade a whole church, such as you have felt in the favoured times of your piety, and there would be a revival of religion—a work of grace that would soon extend to other minds, and catch, like spreading fires, on the altars of other hearts. Let a Christian community feel on the great subject of religion what individual Christians sometimes feel, and should *always* feel, and, so far as the church is concerned, there would be all the phenomena that exist in a revival of religion. A revival in the church is a revival in individual hearts—and nothing more. It is when each individual Christian becomes more sensible of his obligations, more prayerful, more holy, and more anxious for the salvation of men. Let every professing Christian awake to what he should be, and come under the full influence of his religion, and in such a church there would be a revival. Such a sense of obligation, and such joy, and peace, and love, and zeal in the indivi-

dual members of a church *would be a revival.* But in the most earnest desires for your own salvation there is no violation of any of the proper laws of Christian action. In great, strenuous, and combined efforts for the salvation of others, in unceasing prayer for the redemption of all the world, there is no departure from the precepts of Christ, nor from the Spirit which he manifested on earth.

3. The third feature that occurs in a revival of religion, to which it is proper to direct your attention, is, that an extensive influence goes over a community, and affects with seriousness many who are ultimately converted to God. Many individuals are usually made serious; many gay and worldly amusements are suspended; many persons, not accustomed to go to the place of prayer, are led to the sanctuary; many formerly indifferent to religion, or opposed to it, are now willing to converse on it; many perhaps are led to pray in secret and to read the Bible, who before had wholly neglected the means of grace. Many who never enter into the kingdom of God seem to be just on its borders, and hesitate long whether they shall give up the world and become Christians, or whether they shall give up their serious impressions and return to their former indiffer-

ence and sins. The subsiding of a revival, or the dying zeal of Christians, or some powerful temptation, or a strong returning tide of worldliness and vanity, leave many such persons still with the world, and their serious impressions vanish—perhaps to return no more.

4. It remains only to be added as an essential feature in a revival, that it is produced by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not the work of man, however human agency may be employed. Imperfections there may be, and things to regret there may be, as in all that man touches there is —but the phenomenon itself we regard as the work of the Holy Ghost, alike beyond human power to produce it and to controul it. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth;" and such is the work of the Spirit, alike in an individual conversion or in a revival of religion. The wind, sometimes gentle, sometimes terrific, sometimes sufficient only to bend the heads of the field of wheat, or to shake the leaf of the aspen, sometimes sweeping in the fury of the storm over hills and vales, illustrates the way in which God's Spirit influences human hearts. You have seen the pliant osier bend gently before the zephyr, and

the flowers and the fields of grain gently wave in a summer's eve: so gently does the Spirit of God breathe upon a church and a people; so calm, so lovely, so pure, are those influences which incline the mind to prayer, to thought, to Christ, to heaven. You have seen the clouds grow dark in the western sky: they roll upward and onward, infolding on themselves, and throwing their ample volumes over the heavens. The lightnings play, and the thunder rolls, and the tornado sweeps over hills and vales, and the proud oak crashes on the mountains. "The wind blows where it pleases;" and thus, too, the Spirit of God passes with more than human power over a community, and many a stout-hearted sinner, like the quivering elm or oak, trembles under the influences of truth. *They* see a dark cloud gathering in the sky; they hear the thunder of justice; they see the heavens flash along their guilty path; and they are prostrated before God, like the forest before the mighty tempest. The storm passes by, and the sun rides serene again in the heavens, and universal nature smiles—beautiful emblem of the effect of a revival of religion.

Such is a brief description of what actually occurs. I shall now proceed to show that these

phenomena are such as we have reason to expect from the manner in which the human mind is constituted, and society organized.

I first call your attention to the manner in which society is constituted, and to the inquiry whether such a work of grace is in any way adapted to its original laws and propensities. The idea which I wish to illustrate is, that *God has adapted society to be moved simultaneously by common interests.* He *might* have made the world differently. He might have peopled it with independent individuals—bound together by no common sympathies, cheered by no common joys, impelled to effort by no common wants. All that is tender in parental and filial affection; all that is mild, bland, purifying in mutual love; all that is elevating in sympathetic sorrow and joy; all that is great and ennobling in the love of the species, might have been unknown. Isolated individuals, though surrounded by thousands, there might have been no cord to bind us to the living world, and we might have wept alone, rejoiced alone, died alone. The sun might have shed his beams on us in our solitary rambles, and not a mortal have felt an interest in our bliss or woe. Each melancholy individual might have lived unbenefitted by the existence of any other, and with

no one to shed a tear on the bed of moss, when in disease he would lie down, and when he would die.

But this is not the way in which God has chosen to fit up the world. He has made the race one great brotherhood, and each one has some interest in the obscurest man that lives,—in the wildest barbarian that seeks a shelter beneath a rock, or that finds a home in a cave. Pierce their veins. The same purple fluid meanders there. Analyse their feelings. Unknown to each other, they weep over the same distress; strangers in other things, they mingle their efforts to save the same fellow-mortal from death. This great common brotherhood God has broken up into communities of nations, tribes, clans, families—each with its own sets of sympathies, with peculiar interests, with peculiar sorrows and joys. One design of this is to divide our sorrows; another to double our joys; another to perpetuate and to spread just sentiments—to diffuse rapidly all that will meliorate the condition of the race. Sorrow hath not half its pangs when you can mingle your tears with those of a sister or a wife; and joy has not diffused half its blessings until *your* joy has lighted up the countenance of another—be it a son, a father, or even a stranger.

Now there was no way conceivable in which t sentiments and feelings could be so rapidly read as by this very organization. Susceptible it is, like every thing else, of being perverted evil purposes, yet still it is stronger in favour virtue than of vice, of religion than of irre-gion. We appeal, then, to this organization, id maintain that the way to propagate and cure just sentiments in a community, is to ap-eal to common sympathies and common feelings. f you wish to spread any opinions and principles, ou will not do it by appealing to individuals *as uch*, you will call to your aid the power of the social organization. You will rouse men by their common attachment to country; you will remind them of dear-bought liberty; you will lay before them their common dangers; you will awaken a *common* feeling, and endeavour to lead them forth to the martial field together. When danger presses, you will strike a chord that shall vibrate in every heart, and you will expect sympathy, concert, united action. I have seen during the last few years a common sympathy extend through all the commercial world. I have seen the merchants of our cities and towns agitated by a common apprehension of danger, and their hearts vibrating with a common emotion, from Bangor

to New Orleans. I ask why there may not be as deep common feeling on the subject of religion? I have seen, during the past few months, this whole community agitated on the eve of a pending election. Two great parties, vigilant, active, energetic, fired with the hope of victory, and each feeling that the destiny of the nation depended on the result, were arrayed against each other. Committees were appointed to make arrangements; public meetings were held, and the flagging faith and zeal of vast assemblies were roused by appeals to patriotism and the love of country or of party; names were registered, and the sentiments of every man were ascertained, and the whole community was roused in the exciting struggle. Every man felt himself at liberty, or called on in duty, to speak to his neighbour, to sound his sentiments, and to endeavour to bring him to the polls. I blame not this zeal,—but I refer to it to ask why the same zeal and interest should be deemed improper on the subject of religion? Assuredly not because it is less important, or because it is less proper to propagate great and noble sentiments by an appeal to the common feelings of men. Let the same zeal and ardour be manifested in religion; let the churches evince the same anxiety for the honour

of their Lord and Redeemer, and for his ascendancy in the hearts of men, which political organizations have done; or even let the members of the churches in this land be warmed with the same solicitude for the prevalence of religion which *they* have shown for the triumph of their party, and, I was about to say, it would be all that we could pray for in a revival of religion.

Certainly, after what our eyes have seen during the last year, no one should ever blame the ardour and zeal of the friends of Christ, or object against men's being simultaneously excited and moved on the subject of religion. Not till the zeal of Christians approaches in some measure this political zeal, and not till the anxiety of men to save their souls becomes something like the anxiety to secure the election of a favourite candidate, should the note of opposition be heard against revivals of religion.—So I see, in the history of the past, the dying spark of freedom often kindled to a flame, and liberty come out of great common public excitement. Thought rouses thought, and mind acts on mind, and truth presses on truth, till a country is roused and its great interests are safe. In time of danger, I see men with common feelings rush to the standard of freedom. The plough is left in the furrow; and the counting-

house is forsaken; and the ship is moored to the wharf; and the tools of the mechanic are dropped; and the places of amusement are closed; and home is abandoned; and the hold on gold is loosed; and men of affluence seize the sword; and the professions yield up their men of talent to take their place at the head of armies; and the earth trembles under the mighty tread of the advancing legions—for the great common interests of a nation are in danger. Then deeds of self-denial become the theme of the eloquent, and the names of these men are given in charge to history, to be transmitted to future times.

I speak not of this to blame it. I ask only, why should not religion be expected to be extended and perpetuated by some such appeals to the common feelings and sympathies of men? But if so, there would be a revival of religion.

In further illustration of this, I observe, that however solitary and dissocial infidelity may be, this is not the nature of Christianity. Infidelity may appeal to no sympathies and no common hopes, but this is not the nature of the Christian religion. Infidelity may have no power to increase the tenderness of attachment, to purify friendship, to bind the cords of love more closely; but it is not so with Christianity. Infidelity has always

loved to snap the cords of social life rudely asunder, but Christianity has loved to make stronger those silken ties, and to deepen all the tender sympathies of the heart. There is not one of the sympathies of our nature that Christianity does not make more tender, not one of the social affections that it does not design to strengthen and to purify. It aims to sanctify all that is social, kind, and tender in men.

I know the objection that is brought against revivals, that they are the work of sympathy alone. But I am yet to understand why religion is to be spread through the world by denying it the aid of the social sympathies, and of those tender feelings which facilitate the propagation of other just opinions and feelings. I am yet to learn, when the flame of patriotism is made to burn more pure and bright by appealing to all that is tender and sympathetic in our nature, why *religion* is to be regarded as suspicious and tarnished because the pleadings of a father or mother, or the tears of a sister have been the occasion, though amidst deep excitement, of directing the thoughts to eternity. To me it seems there is a peculiar loveliness in the spread of religion in this way; and I love to contemplate Christianity calling to its aid whatever of tenderness, kindness,

and love there may be existing in the bosom of fallen and erring man. These sympathies are the precious remains of the joys of paradise lost; they may be made invaluable aids in the work of securing paradise again. They serve to distinguish man, though fallen, from the dissocial and unsympathising apostacy of beings of pure malignancy in hell, and their existence in man *may* have been one of the reasons why *he* was selected for redemption, while fallen angels were passed by in their sins. On no subject have we so many common interests at stake as in religion. I look upon a family circle. What tender feelings! What mutual love! What common joys! What united sorrows! The blow that strikes one member strikes all. The joy that lights up one countenance, diffuses its smiles over all. Together they kneel by the side of the one that is sick; together they rejoice at his recovery; or they bow their heads and weep when he dies, and put on the same sad habiliments of grief and walk to his grave. Nor are these all their common joys and woes. They are plunged into the same guilt and danger. They are together under the fearful visitations of that curse which has travelled down from the first apostacy of man. They are going to a common abode beneath the ground. And

that guilty and suffering circle, too, *may be*, irradiated with the same beam of hope, and the same balm of Gilead, and the same great Physician, may impart healing there. Now we ask why they may not become Christians together? Sunk in the same woes, why may they not rise to the same immortal hope? When one member is awakened, why should not the same feeling run through the united group? When one is impressed with the great thoughts of immortality, why should not the same thoughts weigh on each spirit? And when the eyes of one kindle with the hope of eternal life, why should not every eye catch the immortal radiance, and every heart be filled with the hope of heaven? And why may we not appeal to them by all the hopes of sitting down together in a world of bliss, and by all the fears of being separated to different destinies in an eternal heaven or hell? And yet let this feeling go through this family, and produce its appropriate results, and there would be a revival of religion.

The truth is, there are no sympathies so deep on any other subject as on the subject of religion. The sympathies of the human heart are never met and satisfied, till they are met by religion. The hopes, the fears, the joys of man never find a corresponding object till he looks

away from time and is filled with the hope of heaven. That aged man once full of hope in the cheerful visions of early life, now sits down and weeps, that in all life's ambition, its honours, and its joys, he has never realized what he anticipated. The big tear rolls down his cheek worn with age and care, when he remembers how the world has flattered and betrayed him; and there he sits at the close of life on the borders of a boundless ocean, waiting to be borne to some land of bliss which he has never yet found. He has had sympathies, hopes, fears, anticipations, which have never been satisfied by this world, which nothing now can satisfy, until the eye is fixed on immortality, and he can look to a heaven of boundless glory as his home. That family so tender, so amiable, so lovely, so united in sorrows and in joys, has sympathetic emotions which can never be met but by the united hope of heaven. Never will they know the richness of pure attachment to each other until they are united in the service of God, and can look forward to the same heaven as their home. Never will their sorrows produce what they should produce, or their joys be followed with the blessings which they should convey, until all their sympathies are sanctified by the Gospel of peace, and parents

and children alike hope to strike together the harp of praise in heaven. Society everywhere is full of anticipations, sympathies, and hopes, that are never fully met until a tide of religious feeling flows over the community, uniting many hearts simultaneously in the hope of heaven.

In conclusion I would observe, that if the views which have now been presented are correct, you will accord with me in the sentiment, that such a work should be an object of the fervent prayer of every friend of the Saviour. If, then, you have ever felt in your own hearts the power of divine grace; if you have ever felt the worth of the soul; if you have felt that you are soon to meet your fellow-mortals at the judgment-seat; if you have any love for your children and friends, for the church and the world, for the thoughtless multitudes amidst whom we dwell, let me entreat you to cry unto God without ceasing FOR A REVIVAL OF PURE RELIGION.

SERMON II.

VINDICATION OF REVIVALS, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THIS COUNTRY.

"DROP DOWN YE HEAVENS, FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES POUR DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: LET THE EARTH OPEN, AND LET THEM BRING FORTH SALVATION AND LET RIGHTEOUSNESS SPRING UP TOGETHER." Isa. xlv. 8.

In resuming the subject discussed in my last discourse, I propose to submit some additional considerations, adapted to show the nature of revivals of religion, and to vindicate them from objections. My general aim will be to show that they are the regular and proper result of the means which God is employing; that they are promised in the Bible as invaluable blessings; and that their value has been evinced by their effects in the history of the church, and especially by the history of our own country. This will be attempted in a series of propositions, which will be intended as a continuance of those which were offered in my last discourse.

I. My first remark is, that the dealings of God in his providence are fitted to produce revivals of religion. The phenomenon which I am endeavouring to describe, you will recollect, is the *simultaneous conversion of many souls to Christ,* and a rapid advance in promoting the purity and zeal of Christians. The question now is, whether there is anything in the dealings of Providence which is fitted, if a proper impression were made, to produce this result.

Let me for one moment refer you to facts which are constantly passing before your eyes. Here falls, struck down by the hand of an unseen God, some endeared member of a family—a father, a brother, a sister, or a mother. What is the effect? There is a common lamentation around the dying bed of the friend, and a united, sad, and slow procession to the tomb. There is a sundering at once of many ties; a common feeling in view of a common loss; and together they bow the head and weep. The attention of the whole group is turned away from scenes of vanity, gain, and ambition; a palsying blow is laid on half the comforts of life, and the weeping group sit down in sackcloth and ashes. The theatre, the ball-room, and the splendid party are forsaken; and gloom is spread over the

counting-room, and the man leaves the scene of his domestic grief reluctantly to go there. He has no heart now for amusement or pleasure, or even for the usual much-loved scenes of his business and ambition. God has for a time sundered the tie which bound the united group to the living world, and has made an awful chasm in their circle.

Does this affect a solitary individual? No; it affects a community. Is it designed to be the whole effect of this affliction to produce grief? Too well we know the purposes of that benevolent Father who has caused these tears, to believe this. It is to arrest the attention, and direct it to better things,—to God, to Christ, to heaven. It is to lead to reflection on sin, and death, and the judgment, and eternity. It is to admonish all the weeping group to prepare to die. The scene is *fitted* to lead to a serious life, to religion, to God. But is it fitted to make one only a Christian—is it an appeal to solitary, independent emotions? No: it extends to the total group. And if a suitable impression were made by it on all, it would lead them together to the Saviour. Yet here would be all the elements of a revival of religion; and here is an event fitted to lead a *community* up to God.

So, when pestilence spreads among a people, and thousands die; so when famine is abroad on the earth, there is an appeal made to *communities;* and the thoughts of men, if any suitable impression were made, would be directed to God and to a better world. So—to change the theme—the earth renewed in spring-time,—the fresh proofs of the goodness of God,—the bounties of his hand, new every morning, repeated every evening,—all are fitted to lead men to God, and are an appeal to them as *communities.* And there is neither a judgment of the Almighty, nor a blessing that comes from our great Father's hand, that is not fitted to impress communities with the importance of religion, and to lead alienated, social man, back to God. Thus, threatened ruin roused Nineveh to repentance; and thus God visits the earth alike with judgment and mercy, to rouse the attention of communities, and direct their thoughts to eternity and to heaven.

II. But whatever may be said of providential dealings, one thing is clear—the *truth* of God is adapted to promote revivals of religion. That great system of glorious doctrines which constitutes "the everlasting Gospel," is adapted to produce every where such works of grace among men. It began its career in a glorious revival of

religion on the day of Pentecost. It showed its power moving communities, and especially the communities made up of cities and large towns, in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, in Ephesus, in Corinth, in Rome. The Gospel was propagated at first by a succession of most signal works of grace, carried on alike among the most degraded and the most refined portions of mankind; and it has continued, as we shall yet see, to extend its power and influence mainly in this manner.

Even now, if the truths of the Bible were applied by the Spirit of God to the hearts of the people in this house, the scenes of the day of Pentecost would be renewed here. If that same truth were applied, as it might be, to the inhabitants of our great cities, the interesting, though deeply agitating scenes which occurred in Jerusalem and in Ephesus, would be renewed in Philadelphia, in New York, in Boston, in New Orleans. Should the great truths affecting your welfare, my hearers, now put forth their power; should every one here feel as he should feel in view of the reality of his situation, a deep solemnity would come over this house, and there would be a simultaneous rushing to the cross; a burst of feeling in every part of this house,

like that which agitated the bosom of the jailer at Philippi, when he said, "What *must* I do to be saved?" Recall a few of those truths. You are sinners,—sinners deeply depraved, and under the condemning sentence of a most holy but violated law. What if every man and woman and child here should feel this. What deep emotion would agitate their bosoms! What anxiety would be depicted on every countenance! How would the now roving eye be fixed in solemn thought, and the now gay and thoughtless heart prompt the deep inquiry, What is to be my doom? Yet this is just such a scene as occurs in a revival of religion.

Again: You will die—all, all die. You will die soon. You have but few more plans to form and execute, or more probably to leave half-executed or but just commenced, before you will die—inevitably die. Were this truth felt by all, what emotion would there be in this room! What bosom but would swell with the anxious inquiry, What *is it* to die; and what must I do to be prepared for death? Yet here would be such a scene as occurs in a revival of religion. Another truth. You will go to another world: you will stand at the bar of God: you will give a solemn account for all the deeds done in the body: you will bow

with willing or constrained submission to the eternal doom pronounced on men by Jesus Christ: you will go from that tribunal to heaven or to hell. Perhaps in a week, a day, an hour, you may know fully what is meant by those mysterious and awful words, death, judgment, eternity, —what *it is* to die, and to stand before God. And can any one doubt that if all here felt the force of these truths, there would be a simultaneous impression on the subject of religion, and hundreds of voices here crying out, "What must we do to be saved?" These truths are in their nature fitted not to impress one, but all; not to lead one only to prepare to meet God, but to conduct all at the same time to the throne of mercy. Yet here would be a revival of religion. And why should it not be so? What law of our nature, or of Christianity, is violated when such scenes occur? We have sinned together, and why should we not arise together and seek forgiveness? We are travelling together to the grave and to the judgment-bar; why should we not resolve to go together to heaven? The Redeemer has died for us all, and why should we not together seek for pardon through his blood? We shall lie in a common grave, mingle with the same dust of the valley, hear the sound of the

same trumpet of the archangel in the day of judgment; and why should we not feel a common interest in such scenes now, and gather around the same cross, and lay hold together on eternal life? If it be reasonable for an individual to do it, why not for many—for all? Why should not the common feeling go from heart to heart, and *all* resolve by the grace of God to secure the salvation of the soul? What law of our nature would be violated should this be done? Yet here would be all the phenomena of a revival of religion.

III. In the third place, there are evils of sin in all communities which can be overcome only by such influences as attend a revival of religion. I refer to evils of alliance, of compact, of confederation; the sins of association and of common pursuit, where one man keeps another in countenance, or one man leads on the many to transgression. Sin is never, perhaps, solitary. One sin is interlocked with others, and is sustained by others. This is especially the case when the world becomes gay and giddy; when the ordinary means of grace fail to make an impression; when luxury spreads its temptations over a community; when the public mind becomes intent on gain; when political strife rages throughout a commu-

nity; or when some bold and daring allurement of vice engrosses the public mind, and the laws of God and man are alike set at defiance. Such scenes occur peculiarly in cities and large towns. Rarely is it here that one form of iniquity stands by itself; it is interlocked with others. Such combinations of evil can be met only by the power that goes forth in a revival of religion. To meet it and overcome it is beyond the power of man, and beyond the ordinary influences even of the Spirit of God. The only resource of the church, then, is in the right arm of the Most High, and in the power which God displays when hundreds are made to bow simultaneously to the Son of God.

Thus it has usually been in the world. When some chieftain of wickedness has collected a clan of evil-doers; when infidelity has marshalled its forces; when vice and crime triumph in a community, then the church has lifted its voice of prayer, and God has heard its supplications, and has poured down righteousness like the rain, and the desolate world has been made to smile under the influence of truth and salvation. The Gospel of Christ is fitted to meet all those combined evils; and is invested with a power that can disarm every chieftain of wickedness, and break

up every combination of evil, and convert the gay and thoughtless multitudes to God. But it is the Gospel only when it puts forth its most mighty energies. It is the power of God evinced when the church is roused, and when combined efforts to save souls are opposed to combined energies of evil; when the church rises in its strength, and with one voice calls upon God, and with one heart engages in the work of the salvation of men. And it is a truth which cannot be too deeply impressed on the heart of each Christian—a truth, alas! too often forgotten—that the only power in the wide universe which can meet and overcome such combined evil, is the power of the Spirit of God. There are evils of alliance and confederation in every city, which can *never* be met but by a general revival of religion. There are evils in all our churches which can never be removed but by such a work of grace. There are thousands of the young of both sexes to whom we have no access, and who CAN never be reached but by the Spirit of God descending on them with almighty power,—a power that goes forth only when the church is greatly impressed with a sense of existing evils, and when it comes with fervent entreaty to a throne of grace to ask the interposition of the

Almighty arm. In ordinary times, the world, especially in cities, presents such scenes as these. None pursue a solitary, scarcely any one an independent, course of evil. One form of sin is interwoven with another; one countenances another; one leads on another; and all stand opposed with solid front to the Gospel of Christ. The world is arrayed in hostility against God; and not even on the flanks of the immense army can an impression be made; scarce a straggler can be found who can be brought under the influence of the Gospel. Meantime the church slumbers; the mass of professing Christians feel no concern; and if here and there an active Christian is seen, his efforts are solitary and unaided; he is without counsel or concert with others, and he makes no impression on the combined evil around him. In such scenes we are not to wonder that sin triumphs, and that the world moves on undisturbed to death.

Thus far the argument has been to show that revivals of religion are not inconsistent with the laws of the social organization and of the human mind. I shall now change the course of the argument, and adduce illustrations from other sources.

IV. I make my appeal, in the fourth place, to

that argument with which, perhaps, I should have commenced—the testimony of the Bible. The question is, whether the Scriptures speak of such scenes as are known in modern revivals of religion as to be expected under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. I cannot go at length into this part of the argument; but I will group together, first, a collection of passages of Scripture chiefly from one prophet, to shew how *he* felt on the subject, and what were the views which he entertained of the effects of the true religion when the Messiah should have come. I refer to Isaiah. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together." So the *effect* of such a work of grace is described in a song of praise in the mouth of the church. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth

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blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Joel ii. 28—32. This description is expressly applied by an apostle to the first great revival of religion that occurred after the ascension of the Saviour on the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. On that memorable day, and in that memorable place, was the prototype and the exemplar of all true revivals of religion. I am aware that some have supposed that that whole scene was miraculous, and that it cannot be expected again to occur, since the days of miracles have ceased. But I am ignorant of the arguments which demonstrate that there was aught of miracle in this, except in the power of speaking in foreign languages, conferred on the apostles—a power which of itself converted no one of the three thousand who on that day gave their hearts to the Saviour. The power of speaking foreign languages had but two effects, one was, to furnish evidence that the religion was from God; the other to enable them to make known its truths in the ears of the multitude assembled from dif-

ferent parts of the world. It was by the proper influence of TRUTH that the multitudes were alarmed and awakened; and why should not the same truth produce the same effect now? It was indeed by the power of God: but that same power is exerted in the conversion of every sinner; and why may it not now be employed in converting many simultaneously? It was indeed by the Holy Ghost: but no sinner is awakened or converted now without his power; and why may not that be exerted still on many as well as on one? The great fact in the case was, that several thousands were converted under the preaching of the truth by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Miracles changed no one. The laws of mind were violated in the case of no one. No effect was produced which the *truth* was not adapted to produce. And why should not the same effect be again produced by the preaching of the same truth, and by the power of the same sacred Spirit?

Remember, also, that on scenes like this the heart of the Saviour was intently fixed. To prepare the way for this; to furnish truth that might be presented in times like this, he preached and toiled; to make it possible that scenes like this should be witnessed among men,

he died; to secure the presence of the Holy Ghost in this manner, he ascended to heaven. "It is expedient for you," said he, "that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (*i.e.* convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John xvi. 7, 8. The Saviour did depart: he ascended to his native skies. His disciples waited for the promised blessing, at once the source of comfort to their disconsolate hearts, and the pledge that their Lord and Master had reached the courts of heaven. Fifty days after his resurrection—ten days only after his ascension, lo! the promised Spirit descended; and the conversion of three thousand in a single day, on the very spot where the hands of men had been just imbrued in the blood of the Lamb of God, and a part of whom had been concerned, doubtless, in enacting that horrid tragedy, showed that the human heart was under his controul, and that the most wicked men, in one of the most guilty cities on the earth, might be simultaneously swayed and changed in a revival of religion.

Were there time, we might follow the apostles as they went forth from that place fresh from the

presence of God, after having thus had a living demonstration of what the truth was fitted to effect on masses of mind. Let any one look at the record made respecting Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, and he will see that the Gospel was propagated there amidst scenes that resemble, in all their essential features, modern revivals of religion. Indeed, there was no other way in which it could be done. The apostles never contemplated the conversion of solitary, isolated individuals. They expected to move *masses of mind, interlocked and confederated communities of sin;* AND IT WAS DONE.

V. I have reserved for a fifth argument or illustration, the state of things in our own country, to show, by an appeal to facts here, the desirableness and the genuineness of such a work as I am endeavouring to describe. The question is, has the history of religion in our own land shed any light on the inquiry whether such effects are to be expected to attend the preaching of the Gospel, or whether it is desirable that Christians should labour and pray that revivals may be witnessed in the cities, towns, villages, and hamlets of our republic? To us, and to the world at large, this is a deeply interesting question; for the fame of American revivals has crossed the

ocean and reached the ears of our Christian brethren beyond the waters, and their plans and labours are receiving direction from what their own travellers and our books report to them as the mode of maintaining religion here. And it is not too much to say, that on the purity of revivals here will depend the efforts of no small part of the Protestant world, and that their influence will be felt at every missionary station on the globe. No one, therefore, can over-estimate the importance of just sentiments on this subject here.

For another reason it is important to know what is taught about the value of revivals in the history of our own country. In every thing pertaining to the welfare of man, other nations are looking with deep interest to our institutions. Statesmen are taking lessons from our history; the friends of freedom are exchanging congratulations on our prosperity; and the world stands in admiration of the vigour of our movements. Religion, too, has assumed new relations to the state. It is dissevered from civil institutions, and suffered to move by itself. On this our greatest, and in the eyes of other nations, our most hazardous experiment, that of committing religion to the blessing and patronage of its God and Sa-

viour, the eye of the world is intently fixed. Hence foreigners speak with great interest of all things connected with religion here; and they speak of revivals as almost peculiar to our republic. Some have thought and spoken candidly of these scenes; but the great mass have ridiculed and caricatured them,—"understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Most foreign travellers have been as little qualified to speak of our religion as they have of our civil institutions. Most of them have never witnessed a revival of religion. Almost all have received their impressions from the enemies of revivals, and have characterized them as gross fanaticism and wildfire. They have gone and reported to the world abuses and disorders as the ordinary characteristics of such scenes, and the world has received its impressions from such reports. Unhappily it is one of the characteristics of our people to look to foreigners for an account of our own institutions; and many an American deems the record of such impartial foreigners of much more value than the testimony of his own eyes about what is occurring at his very door. Books distinguished for gross abuse of our religion and our country at large; books made to produce an impression across the ocean, and designedly filled

Almighty arm. In ordinary times, the world, especially in cities, presents such scenes as these. None pursue a solitary, scarcely any one an independent, course of evil. One form of sin is interwoven with another; one countenances another; one leads on another; and all stand opposed with solid front to the Gospel of Christ. The world is arrayed in hostility against God; and not even on the flanks of the immense army can an impression be made; scarce a straggler can be found who can be brought under the influence of the Gospel. Meantime the church slumbers; the mass of professing Christians feel no concern; and if here and there an active Christian is seen, his efforts are solitary and unaided; he is without counsel or concert with others, and he makes no impression on the combined evil around him. In such scenes we are not to wonder that sin triumphs, and that the world moves on undisturbed to death.

Thus far the argument has been to show that revivals of religion are not inconsistent with the laws of the social organization and of the human mind. I shall now change the course of the argument, and adduce illustrations from other sources.

IV. I make my appeal, in the fourth place, to

that argument with which, perhaps, I should have commenced—the testimony of the Bible. The question is, whether the Scriptures speak of such scenes as are known in modern revivals of religion as to be expected under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. I cannot go at length into this part of the argument; but I will group together, first, a collection of passages of Scripture chiefly from one prophet, to shew how *he* felt on the subject, and what were the views which he entertained of the effects of the true religion when the Messiah should have come. I refer to Isaiah. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together." So the *effect* of such a work of grace is described in a song of praise in the mouth of the church. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth

the axe of the foreigner, and new laws and new institutions began in the western world.

That this should continue to be always the leading feature among a people situated as they were, was not perhaps to be expected. He knows little of the propensities of our nature who would be surprised to learn that religion began before long to occupy a secondary place in the public mind. Doomed to the hard toil of felling the forests, and reducing a most perverse and intractable soil to a fit state for cultivation; feeling soon the influence of that then infant passion which has since in this country expanded to such giant proportions—the love of gain; engaged in conflicts with savages, and subject to the ravages of war—of that species of war which showed mercy neither to age nor sex—it was not wonderful that their early zeal should die away, and that iniquity should come in like a flood. Such was the fact. Within less than a hundred years a most sad change had occurred in this country on the subject of religion. Extensively in the churches of New England, and in all the churches, there was a most melancholy decline. From this state of apathy nothing could rouse them but a series of mighty movements like that on the day of Pentecost; and it was then—now just a hundred years

ago—that those wonderful displays of divine power in revivals of religion, which have so eminently characterized our own country, and which were the pledge that God meant to perpetuate the religious institutions of our land, commenced.

II. This was the second period in our religious history. It began under the ministry of Whitefield, Edwards, the Tennants, and their fellow-labourers, and continued from about the year 1730 to 1750. Of this great religious excitement, which extended from Maine to Georgia, and which created the deepest interest in Britain and America, I need now to say little. The history has been written by that great man who was a principal actor in those scenes—I mean President Edwards. I will just add, that the character and talents of the men engaged in those religious movements were such as to place them above the suspicion of their being the work of feeble minds, or the productions of fanaticism. The Tennants were among the most able ministers of the land. Davies, afterwards the successor of Edwards in Princeton College, was one of the most eloquent and holy men that this country has produced. Edwards, as a man of profound thought, as an acute and close reasoner, has taken his place by the side of Locke, and Reid, and Dugald Stewart,

if he has not surpassed them all: and his name is destined to be as immortal as theirs. Probably no man in any country or age has possessed the *reasoning faculty* in such perfection as Jonathan Edwards; a man raised up, among other purposes, to rebuke the sneer of the foreigner, when he charges America with the want of talent, and to shew that the most profound intellect is well employed when it is engaged in promoting revivals of religion. From those profound disquisitions, those abstruse and subtle inquiries which have given immortality to his name, he turned with ease and pleasure to the interesting scenes when God's Spirit descended on the hearts of men. The name of Whitefield is one that is to go down, as an orator, as far as the name of Demosthenes or Cicero. Garrick, first of dramatic actors, rejoiced that he had not chosen the stage, confessing that if he had, his own fame would have been eclipsed; and Franklin—that great philosopher—sought every opportunity to listen to the eloquence of that wonderful man. He influenced more minds than have ever before or since been swayed by any public speaker; and diffused his sentiments through more hearts than any other orator that has lived. It pleased God that these revivals should be produced and carried

on under the ministry of the most profound reasoner and the most eloquent man of the age, that scepticism itself might be disarmed, and that the world might have a pledge that they were not the work of enthusiasm.

The effect of those revivals was long felt in the American churches. Yet other scenes were drawing near of great interest in this land, and deeply affecting the vitality of religion. Soon the colonies were agitated with the calamities incident to the war with France, and then soon again with the absorbing events of our own revolution. Throughout the land the effects of those scenes were felt in the churches and on religion. In not a few instances churches were disorganized; their members were led to the battle-field; their ministers were compelled to leave their charges; the houses of God were converted into hospitals; the public mind was engrossed with the events of war; the public strength was consecrated to the defence of violated rights; and time, and influence, and property were demanded to achieve our independence. As in all wars, the institutions of religion were neglected: the Sabbath ceased extensively to be a day of holy rest; and profaneness, and intemperance, and licentiousness—every where the attendants of war—spread over the land. In

the scenes which characterized the American revolution, revivals of religion could not be expected to occur, nor could it be otherwise than that a state of apathy on the subject should characterize the American people.

There was another cause immediately succeeding this, that tended still more to shake the firmness of our religious institutions. I allude to the French revolution. From the first, the American people deeply sympathized with that nation in their struggles for freedom. To them we had been bound by ties of gratitude for valuable services, no less than by the sympathies which in this land we always must feel for those who pant for liberty. The consequence was obvious; and, though alarming, inevitable. The opinions of their philosophers became popular: their books were kindly entertained, and their doctrines embraced. The revolution in France was conducted on infidel principles, and with infidels and atheists as the guides of the nation. In our love for liberty we forgot our hatred of infidelity; and in our ardent wishes for success in the cause of freedom, we forgot that our own freedom had been achieved under the guidance of other men than Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert; and that we had acknowledged another Divinity than the

"goddess of reason." And the result was what might have been foreseen. In the years that succeeded our revolution, the nation was fast sinking into infidelity; and Paine's "Age of Reason" was fast supplanting the Bible in the minds of thousands of our countrymen. A conflict arose between Christianity and infidelity. The argument was close and long, and infidelity was driven from the field, and a victory was achieved not less important than the victories in our revolution. That intellectual warfare saved the churches in this land; and the result furnished a pledge that infidelity is not to triumph in this western world.

III. Yet it was not by argument only that this speculative infidelity was met. And this leads me to the *third* period in our religious history. The Holy Spirit sealed that argument, and engraved that truth on the heart in the revivals of religion that characterized the close of the last and the beginning of the present century. Of the favoured agents in that time, it is necessary only to mention the name of DWIGHT—a name that was a pledge that solid piety, sober views, elevated character, a brilliant fancy, high integrity and moral worth, might deem itself honoured to be engaged in a revival of religion.

Under a single sermon of his, it is recorded that no less than three revivals of religion commenced: and in Yale college—a place where least of all we should look for enthusiasm and fanaticism, no less than four revivals occurred under his presidency, resulting in the conversion of two hundred and ten young men, who, in their turn, have been the instruments of the salvation of thousands of souls. It was in such scenes that God interposed to save the churches of our country. And but for such works of grace at the fountains of intelligence and power, infidelity would have diffused its rank and poisonous weeds over the land.

IV. The other period in our religious history is more directly our own times—times that have been eminently characterized for revivals of religion. I cannot go at length into a statement of the features of those revivals, nor of their influence. I can only say, that in one part of our land, and in the oldest seminary of learning in our nation, there had been a deplorable apostacy from the sentiments of our fathers; that the deity and atonement of the Son of God was denied; that this form of pretended Christian doctrine advanced with great pretensions to learning, to exclusive liberality, to critical skill, to refinement,

to courtesy—that it appealed to the great and the gay, and sought its proselytes in the mansions of the rich and the homes of the refined; and that it stood up against revivals of religion, and all the forms of expanded Christian beneficence. This scheme was met by argument, and learning, and critical power equal to its own. But not by that alone. It has been met by revivals of religion, and its progress checked by the work of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of men.

Another feature of our times. We were fast becoming a nation of drunkards. We could ascertain that there were three hundred thousand drunkards in our land, and that from ten to twenty thousand were annually consigned to drunkards' graves. And this mighty evil has also been met by revivals of religion. Hundreds of churches have been visited by the Spirit of God as the result of their efforts in the temperance reformation; and hundreds of thousands of our young men have been saved from the evils and disgraces of intemperance because God has visited the churches with the influences of his Spirit.

There was another dark feature in our religious prospects. The love of gain had become, and is still our besetting sin. This passion goads on our countrymen, and they forget all other things.

They forsake the homes of their fathers; they wander away from the place of schools and churches to the wilderness of the west; they go from the sound of the Sabbath bell, and they forget the Sabbath and the Bible, and the place of prayer; they leave the places where their fathers sleep in their graves, and they forget the religion which sustained and comforted them. They go for gold, and they wander over the prairie, they fell the forest, they ascend the stream in pursuit of it, and they trample down the law of the Sabbath, and soon, too, forget the laws of honesty and fair dealing in the insatiable love of gain. Meantime every man, such is our freedom, may advance any sentiments he pleases. He may defend them by all the power of argument, and enforce them by all the eloquence of persuasion. He may clothe his corrupt sentiments in the charms of verse, and he may make a thousand cottages beyond the mountains re-echo with the corrupt and the corrupting strain. He may call to his aid the power of the press, and may secure a lodgment for his infidel sentiments in the most distant habitation in the republic. What can meet this state of things, and arrest the evils that spread with the fleetness of the courser or the wind? What can pursue and overtake these

wanderers but revivals of religion—but that Spirit which, *like* the wind, acts where it pleases? Yet they must be pursued. If our sons go thus, they are to be followed and reminded of the commands of God. None of them are to be suffered to go to any fertile vale or prairie in the west without the institutions of the Gospel; nor are they to be suffered to construct a hamlet, or to establish a village, or to build a city that shall be devoted to any other god than the God of their fathers. By all the self-denials of benevolence; by all the power of argument; by all the implored influences of the Holy Ghost, they are to be persuaded to plant there the rose of Sharon, and to make the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to bud and blossom as the rose. In such circumstances God HAS interposed; and He has thus blessed our own land and times with signal revivals of religion.

The remarks thus far made conduct us to this conclusion, that we owe most of our religion in this land to revivals; that the great and appalling evils which have threatened us as a people have been met and turned back by revivals; that every part of our country has thus, either directly or indirectly, felt the influence of revivals. Scarce a village or a city smiles on all our vast landscape

that has not been hallowed in some parts of its history by the deep-felt presence of Israel's God. And he who loves his country, who looks back with gratitude to those periods when the God of salvation has conducted us through appalling dangers; or who looks abroad upon our vast land and contemplates the mighty movements in the pursuit of gold, and pleasure, and ambition; who sees here how inefficacious are all ordinary means to arrest the evils which threaten us, will feel the necessity of crying unto God unceasingly for the continuance and extension of REVIVALS OF PURE RELIGION.

SERMON III.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIVALS.

"AND THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM." Luke xxiv. 47.

In two previous discourses I have endeavoured to explain the nature of revivals of religion: to show that they are in accordance with the laws of the human mind and the mode in which society is organized; that they are described in the Scriptures as inestimable blessings; and that their value has been shown in a special manner in the history of religion in our own country. My particular object in this course of lectures, however, was not so much to vindicate revivals in general, as to consider their relation to cities and large towns; and I propose now to enter on this, the main part of our subject. The point which will be before us at this time will be, THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN CITIES AND LARGE TOWNS. On a subject so copious,

I scarcely know where to begin, or what topics of illustration to select out of the numbers which at once present themselves to the mind. But passing by a great variety of considerations which cannot be urged in the short time allotted to a single public service, or reserving them to illustrate other parts of our main subject, I shall select a few designed to ascertain the Redeemer's view of the importance of cities, the view of the apostles on the same subject, and the bearing which the state of religion in cities must have on the world at large.

I. I begin with the view which the Saviour had of the importance of special efforts for the conversion of cities.

Our text contains an expression of his views about the importance of revivals in cities. When it was uttered, he was about to finish his work on earth. He had made an atonement for sin; he had risen from the dead; he was soon to ascend to heaven; and he was about giving to his disciples his parting charge, and directing them in regard to their plans and labours for the conversion of the world. It is natural to suppose that he would suggest to them the most feasible and economical mode of expending their strength and forming their plans; and that he would direct

them how to act in the most efficient manner on the strong points of influence in the world. Our text contains the sum of his instructions. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM. That was the capital of the nation; that the place where he had been put to death; that a city pre-eminent in wickedness and in influence; and that, therefore, was the place to which their attention was to be first directed. It is worthy of remark also, as an illustration of our subject, that he designed that they should labour there, with special reference to a revival of religion in that city. There they were to tarry "until they were endued with power from on high" (verse 49), and there to "wait for the promise of the Father." Acts i. 4. In that great and guilty metropolis they were to remain until the great movement for the conversion of the world to God was to be commenced in a glorious revival of religion.

The Redeemer's views of the importance of religion in cities were further illustrated by his own personal labours when on earth. He had designed a personal ministry that was to continue but three or four years; and it was manifestly a question with him where that period could be most advantageously spent for the great objects

which he had in view. Thirty years he had spent, before he entered on his public work, in the quiet retreats of an obscure and humble country village; far from the noise and bustle of a large town; far from the excitements of the capital; far from the distractions and anxieties of a populous city. He had loved—we may suppose without much danger of indulging in mere fancy—the hills and vales, the fields and groves, the shady retreats, the stillness and quiet of the region around Nazareth,—a love in which all those who desire to cultivate meek, and humble, and pure religion *like* his will participate, for such scenes are most favourable to communion with God. Is it improper to suppose that the feelings which made the Redeemer delight in a place like Nazareth, were such as prompted the following lines from the sweet Christian poet Cowper?—

"Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

"The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem by thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow thee."

But when he entered on his public work, he *emerged* from this obscure and humble life. He made his permanent home in Capernaum, a central city in Galilee, at the head of the sea of Tiberias. He preached in all the cities which skirted the lake of Gennesareth, in the large towns which were between them and the capital, and he preached much amidst assembled thousands on the great festivals in Jerusalem itself. His mighty works were in the vicinity of these large towns, where thousands could easily be assembled to hear him. He was found in the busy haunts of men; his walks were along the shores of that lake where stood Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida; and his aim was to carry at once the influence of his Gospel to the centres of influence and power. The sum of his views on this subject are expressed in the following passages of the New Testament: "And it came to pass," says Matthew, "when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." chap. xi. 1. "I must preach the kingdom of God," said he, "to other cities also, for therefore am I sent." Luke iv. 43. "How often," said he of Jerusalem, "*how often* would I have gathered THY CHILDREN together, even as a hen

gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34. So it is said respecting most of the works of his public ministry. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." Matt. xi. 20. It is a circumstance also which may throw some light on the divine estimate of the importance of cities, that it was predicted that the announcements of the Gospel should be first made to them. "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid: say UNTO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, Behold your God!" Isaiah xi. 9.

The same thing in regard to the views of the Redeemer is everywhere evinced in his instructions to his disciples. It is manifest that he anticipated that the principal sphere of *their* labours would be in cities and large towns. "Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy." Matt. x. 11. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." John x. 1. "When they

persecute you in one city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." Matt. x. 23. From these and numerous similar passages of Scripture it is evident that the Saviour felt that it was of special importance that great efforts should be made for the conversion of cities, and that he not only spent a large portion of his own public ministry there, but anticipated that his apostles would also. We shall not err, therefore, in the conclusion, that he felt that it was of special importance, that cities and large towns should be pervaded with his Gospel, and that *in* those places were to be witnessed signal displays of his saving power.

II. The same conclusion will be reached, if we examine the views which the apostles had of the importance of these fields of labour. I need not say that a large part of the labours of the apostles, so far as the Scripture record informs us, was devoted to cities and large towns, and that the most signal success of the Gospel was there. All that is needful for the illustration of this part of our subject, is the most summary reference to the labours of the apostles and to the character of the large cities where they laboured. I by no means mean to say that the apostles did not

feel it important to preach the Gospel in country villages and neighbourhoods. Their commission extended to all the world, and we know that Paul preached the Gospel in all the places where he travelled. But the idea is, that they felt that cities were central places of power and influence; that they were the strong holds of the enemy of man; that wickedness was concentrated there; and that their object was to go from city to city until they reached the capital of the world, the very seat of imperial power, and formed their plan with a design that the banners of the faith should, if possible before they died, be seen streaming from the palaces of the Cæsars. They acted on the principle on which Alexander and Cæsar, and all the great conquerors of all times act, that of seizing upon the strong places of power and holding them in subjection, with the assurance that all other places will then become an easy conquest.

A slight glance at the labours of the apostles and at the principal places where the Gospel triumphed at first, will show the estimate which they affixed to cities and large towns, and their views of the proper places where special efforts for the spread of the Gospel should be made. The Gospel was first preached, after the ascen-

sion of the Redeemer, in Jerusalem, a city ten miles in circumference, and esteemed the third city of the age, the largest city of the land in which he lived, and the capital of the nation. The apostles went to Antioch, on the Orontes, the capital of Syria, and made that a centre of Christian influence. They preached in Ephesus, regarded as the ornament, and in fact the most proud and splendid city in Asia Minor, and established a church there. There stood one of the seven wonders of the world, and there idolatry was intrenched with a power and sustained with a magnificence not surpassed in any part of the earth. They preached in Derbe, in Lystra, and in Iconium—cities in the same region. They founded churches in Smyrna, the commercial capital of Asia Minor; in Pergamos, the literary capital of Asia Minor; in Thyatira; in Sardis, the once splendid capital of Crœsus; in Philadelphia; and in Laodicea. They preached in Philippi and Thessalonica, and founded churches there. They preached in Athens, the distinguished seat of philosophy, science, and art, and where the Gospel would be opposed by the most subtle and refined philosophy of the world; in Corinth, the splendid capital of Achaia, and the very centre of refinement, of luxury, and of

licentiousness—the Paris of antiquity; and they carried the Gospel to the very capital of the world, and established a church in Rome itself. Now in the records which we have in the Acts of the Apostles, it is remarkable that a large part of the narrative is occupied in detailing the labours of the apostles in these and in other cities; and it is *as* remarkable that notwithstanding all the difficulties in the case, and all the obstacles to the Gospel in cities and large towns, its most signal triumphs were there.

From this allusion to the labours of the apostles, the following things are demonstrated: 1. That they deemed cities and large towns to be worthy of their special attention and their special efforts. 2. That they had the utmost confidence in the truth of the religion which they preached. They had no concealment; they had no fear of submitting the evidences of their religion to the most learned, acute, and philosophic portions of mankind. They *sought* to submit the proofs of Christianity to the philosophers in Athens, in Corinth, and in Rome; they desired to exhibit them to the priests of pagan idolatry, to the literati of the world, and to princes, nobles, and monarchs; they performed their miracles in the most open manner, and adduced the evidence of

the resurrection of their Master on Mars' Hill and in the Roman forum, as well as in Jerusalem: and they confidently expected that if they could *get a hearing*, they could convince the most learned and philosophic portions of mankind of the truth of the Christian religion. Such was not a work of impostors; it was a course pursued only by men who were honest, and who had the most unwavering conviction of the truth of the system which they preached. 3. Their course demonstrates that the Gospel has *power* to meet all forms of sin and corruption, and that there is nothing in cities and large towns that constitutes an insuperable obstacle to a revival of religion. That Gospel which had power to overcome the pride and deep corruption of the Jewish capital, when the Redeemer had just been put to death, which could triumph in gay and voluptuous Corinth, in the splendid capital of Asia Minor, and in Rome itself, has power to meet any form of gaiety, licentiousness, corruption, fashion, idolatry, and combined sin of any city in nominally Christian lands, and in the heathen world. They who doubt that mighty revivals of religion may exist in large cities and towns, doubt in the face of all history, and belie all the records of the early propagation of their religion.

III. Having thus endeavoured to ascertain the sense of the Redeemer and of the apostles in regard to the importance of special efforts for the conversion of cities and large towns, I proceed, in the third place, to remark that that importance is seen from the fact that vast wealth is concentrated in those places, and that the purposes of Christianity require that that wealth should be consecrated to the Redeemer. When I speak of this, I do not mean, of course, that the principal wealth of any community is in such places. That *must* lie scattered over vast surfaces, and be in many hands in order *to maintain* cities and large towns. But I speak of that wealth which is concentrated in the hands of the comparatively few; of the wealth which is available for the purposes of Christian benevolence; of the wealth which has the principal power of corrupting or saving, of destroying or blessing the world. This world is to be converted to God, and it is in vain to attempt this without large and liberal benefactions. To a great extent, the *large* sums needed for that object must and will be derived from the dwellers in cities. It is there that we expect that money will be freely given; whether it be for Christian charity; for schools, and colleges, and seminaries of learning; or whether it be for

political purposes, for the patronage of fashion and vice, for the maintenance of the theatre, or for the support of profligacy and atheism. The effect of true religion is to lead men to consecrate their property honestly and wholly to God; nor can there be any true religion where this is not done. Now one has only to cast an eye over the large cities and towns of this land, to see how important it is that the mighty power of the Gospel should be felt there in constraining the rich to devote their property to God. Let him for a moment reflect on the *abuses* of that property; on the immense sums which are expended in luxury of living; in splendour of dwellings, equipage, and apparel; in intoxicating drinks; in the patronage of the theatre and various corrupting forms of amusement; and it will be no difficult matter to see how important it is that the influence of religion should be felt in the cities of our land. It may seem startling, but it is probably true, to say, that all expenses of the various benevolent societies in this land for the propagation of the Gospel in the heathen world, would be more than met by the annual expenses in one of our large cities for the single article of intoxicating drinks. In the city of New York, during the last year but two, it is ascertained that the

amount paid to support its four theatres was more than was contributed by all the benevolent societies in this country for the spread of the Gospel. That wealth now *all* goes to corrupt and destroy the morals, the peace, and the souls of men. It is in cities eminently that its debasing power is felt. It is there that it alienates the soul from God, and opens fountains of corruption before the unwary and the young. It is there on every hand that we see its abuse to purposes of infamy; there that it eminently resists the Gospel; and there that it sustains the empire of Satan on earth. It is there that foreigners—dancers and actors—who come to debase and corrupt the young with the lax notions of morals which prevail in the licentious capitals of Europe, are chiefly found. And while I speak of this, it is not less important to make another remark on the necessity of revivals of religion in cities. A large portion of that wealth is held by the members of the Christian church, and it is a fact, that the constantly recurring objects of Christian benevolence are sustained by a very few men out of the many hundreds who are members of the churches. To re-convert those who are in the church; to teach them the true value of property, and the true intent of the Giver in bestowing it

on them; to show them "a more excellent way" than to hoard it or to expend it for luxury and magnificence; and to impress on their hearts, as a great vital principle, that all they have belongs to God, and to him alone, is now one of the most desirable objects of Christian benevolence, and one of the chief things to be accomplished by the agency of the Holy Spirit in our land. O if all the wealth in these cities were truly consecrated to God, what desolate fields of heathenism are there in the wide world which would not soon smile under the blessings of the Gospel? what desert and solitary place is there that would not bud and blossom as the rose?

IV. The *talent* concentrated in cities and large towns, is a fourth reason why special efforts should be made for their conversion. Before I am through with what I wish to say on this head, I shall not be suspected of a design to *flatter* the inhabitants of such places as being in general superior to all the rest of mankind in intellectual strength or in solid attainments. I have passed three-fourths of my life and one-third of my ministry in the country; and I have endeavoured to observe the comparative amount of intellect and good sense in the two situations. When I speak, therefore, of the talent in cities as a rea-

son for special effort for their conversion, or to show their importance, I by no means wish to be understood as affirming that the inhabitants of cities are pre-eminently distinguished for what Mr. Locke calls "large, sound, round about sense." I do not mean that there is, in general, more power to appreciate a solid argument or close reasoning; or that there is a better acquaintance with the Bible; or a higher appreciation of the maxims of sound morals; or more patient reflection on the duties of life; or a more attentive contemplation of the relations which men sustain to their Maker; or a higher power of detecting sophistry, or of pronouncing on that which is characterized in public discourses by mere sound, or by false and shallow attempts at reasoning. And to apply my remarks to the immediate subject before us, I by no means mean to say that the mass of people in this land in the country are not as fully able to appreciate good preaching as their more favoured and perhaps envied city brethren. Nor do I mean to say that the hurry and bustle of a city life is well adapted to train men for patient thought; or that the kind of education which the mass of those in the so-called more elevated ranks in cities receive, peculiarly qualifies them for the office of judging

of the truths of religion, in comparison with those who have been trained in what are esteemed the humbler walks of a country life. The truth is, neither situation in itself makes men qualified for patient and sound reflection, neither situation makes them of course fools. Alike in city and in country in this land, there are multitudes—it is the condition of the *mass* of the people—who are endowed with good sense, with sober views, with patient thought, and with appropriate education, to fit them to understand the truths of religion, to weigh well its evidences, and to appreciate a sensible argument when a sensible argument is urged; nor do I know that one *situation* can claim priority over the other.

It is true, moreover, that the talent in a city is often greatly over-rated; and I do not mean to say that the Saviour or the apostles ever sought a city because they supposed the *mass* of intellect there was more elevated or cultivated than elsewhere. It is true that ministers often over-rate the amount of talent in a city, and that they sometimes evince an anxiety to be city pastors,—which is anything but a commendation of their own discernment, or their qualifications for the office, or of their power of judging of the place where true happiness is to be found; for,

I take it, the brightest picture of happiness in this world is in the image of a much-loved and venerated pastor in the quiet retreats of a country parish. It is true, also, that there is sometimes a *fear* of a city congregation and of a city dwelling, which operates much to prevent a faithful application of the truth; *as if* splendid apparel was necessarily connected with profound intellect; or sofas, and ottomans, and marble mantels, and well-ladened centre-tables necessarily implied cultivated minds; or gay and gorgeous equipage conferred the power of criticising profoundly and judging correctly of moral subjects. The truth is, that patient thinking, long-cherished recollections of an apt illustration or a solid argument, and just appreciation of a sound discourse, are often found most perfectly in the farmer who is all the week at his plough, and not in the whirl of fashion and business of a city life; a life where with the scenes of business of Monday morning are obliterated all the arguments, and illustrations, and impressions of the previous day.

But while this is true, it is true, also, that in this land and in all others the talent that most decidedly directs public opinion, and that acts with most power on the public mind, is found concentrated usually in cities and large

towns. The most decided and influential talent in Judea was undoubtedly found in Jerusalem; the most profound intellect in Greece was in Athens and in Corinth; the most mighty minds in the Roman empire were concentrated in Rome itself and in the surrounding towns and villas. It was from these centres that the power of talent —more then than now—at the bar, in the forum, in the senate-chamber,—the power of talent in philosophy, in the drama, in eloquence, and in song, was diffused throughout the world. Such, though to a less extent comparatively, is the case now. The principal talent in the medical and legal professions will seek cities and large towns as the places where it may be exercised to advantage, whether the purpose be gold or fame. Science and literature, for obvious reasons, will be found there; and the talent which seeks to influence great masses of mind, to direct public opinion, or to rise to sudden affluence and fame, will flow to such centres. All this is obvious and indisputable; and it is *as* obvious and indisputable, that it is desirable that special efforts should be made that that talent should be converted to God. It is not that the soul of a profound philosopher, or of a man of eminent legal attainments, or of a man distinguished in the medical

profession, or of a man distinguished for science or eloquence, is of more value, or cost the Saviour more pangs to redeem it, than their humblest client or patient, or the most unlettered man in the cottage of poverty; but it is that that talent is endowed with higher power for good or evil, and that its influence must be wider spread in promoting or retarding true religion.

V. I add, as a fifth consideration, the fact that cities and large towns are places where strangers resort in great multitudes, and that revivals of religion are especially needed there for *their* conversion and for a healthful moral influence on their minds. It will be recollected that in our text the Saviour directs his apostles to *begin* the work of preaching the Gospel "at Jerusalem." Turn now to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and you will see at least one reason why this direction was given. The feast of Pentecost was near, and on that occasion it was arranged by the Redeemer, that the Holy Ghost should descend in the first great and glorious revival of religion. Yet on that occasion we are told "there were dwelling (or sojourning) at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Acts ii. 5. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," we are told were there;

"and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." Acts ii. 9—11. It was not without design that the Gospel was to be first proclaimed with power, and that the Holy Ghost was to descend when these strangers were there. What would be the obvious effect of their conversion? The Gospel would soon be borne by them to the farthest part of the then known world. Those strangers were soon to disperse and return to their homes,—just as the flitting multitudes do that sojourn in this city for a little while for business or for pleasure. But the Saviour saw that *if* those multitudes were brought under the influence of a revival of religion; if while they were in Jerusalem they were led to embrace the true Messiah; if while there their minds were directed to the eternal welfare of the soul, and they should return to their homes imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, the effect would be immediate almost on the remotest portions of the world. How different would be the influence on the destiny of mankind from what it would have been had those "strangers" been invited by the professing Christians to

splendid entertainments and parties of pleasure; or had they been introduced as distinguished strangers often are in our cities now—and I fear sometimes by professing Christians too—to theatres, or invited and tempted, as they are now, to drink deep of the intoxicating bowl!

What would be the effect on the strangers that crowd *this* city of a continual revival of religion here? What would be the effect on their minds and hearts if they should be constrained to feel when they enter our houses of worship, that the Spirit of God was there as he was in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? What would be the effect, if in their transactions of business here, they should find all our merchants—or even all our professedly *Christian* merchants—governed only by the pure and holy principles of the Gospel? What would be the effect, if, when they are invited to our dwellings, they should see the decanter banished from every sideboard and every table, and the style of living regulated by a conscientious regard to the will of Christ; and the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel controlling us in our dwellings? What would be the effect if one mighty and far-pervading revival of religion here, like that on the day of Pentecost, should make the visitors to

the theatres so few that they would be closed, and should make it disreputable for a stranger or a citizen to patronize a place of corruption and infamy? How soon would the effect be visible in the extremity of the land and the world! To see this, let these facts be borne in mind: 1. Great numbers of strangers are in all our large cities, at all times, from every part of our land and the world. I preach the Gospel every year to many hundreds of such persons; and probably I am not exceeding the truth when I say that the aggregate of such persons is considerably more than the number of my regular hearers. To a great extent this is true of all other pastors in this city and in other cities. I trust and believe that the effect of their worshipping with us has not had an unhappy influence on their minds (if I may use the language of Paul as descriptive of what I mean) while they have been "beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Col. ii. 5); and I have been permitted to know of some most happy, and I trust saving, influences on the minds of strangers resulting from their worshipping with us. But it is not unkindness to ask, what *would* have been the effect on the multitudes which have been with us, had they witnessed here scenes like

those on the day of Pentecost? 2. Again; those strangers are usually men of influence, wealth, and power at home. They are the centres of opinion to large circles there. They controul the habits, or the fashions, or the religious opinions of those by whom they are surrounded. A large portion of those to whom I preach in this manner are the respectable and influential merchants of the west; men who are doing as much as any others to form the habits of the mighty empire that is rising up beyond the mountains; men who are moulding that vast population that is soon to give to this nation its president, its great officers of government, and its laws; and men who in that vast region are either to stay the tide of infidelity and sin, or to urge it onward; for if we are ever to be a nation of slaves, the chain that is to bind us is to be forged beyond the mountains. They are the men who are to be the patrons of order and education, of common schools, of colleges, and of the institutions of religion: many of them are men who are pillars in those churches, and whose piety is to receive an impression that shall be lasting even during a temporary sojourning with us. It is needless to ask what would be the influence on such men if they found this city and all these churches

blessed with revivals of religion like rains and dews of heaven.

3. Again: If I address one such stranger now, he will pardon me if I make a remark particularly applicable to himself; if I do not address such an one, the remark will be useful to others, as reminding them of what is the fact in regard to such strangers, and of the need of a pure, heavenly, Christian influence in all our churches here. The remark is, that even Christians are not *always* as consistent and circumspect when they are abroad as when they are at home. They are, or suppose they are, unobserved. They are away from the vigilant eye of a wife, a neighbour, a child. They feel that there is less depending on their example than when they are under the well known eye of a vigilant public opinion. Members of the churches sometimes travel on the Sabbath when away from home, and when they suppose it possible they will not be known as professing Christians. They sometimes attend church but a part of the day when in cities, and the remainder of the day is devoted to *sight-seeing*. It is an obvious plea with them that they are engaged in business during the week, and that it cannot be *very* improper for them to visit public places *once* on the Sabbath

when they are unknown. And it is not improbable that of a Sabbath afternoon, in the spring or summer, enough such professors might usually be found at the places of public resort to constitute a church respectable enough in numbers to celebrate the Lord's Supper. They sometimes also visit places of somewhat doubtful morality, and where, if at home, they never would be found. It is not *impossible* that Christian ministers and other members of the churches sometimes visit the opera in Paris or in Italy, who would have many misgivings about *recommending* such a course to the more spiritual part of their flock or their brother Christians at home, and who themselves, when there, are most conscientious in abstaining from such amusements. And I may ask, are professors of religion and officers of the churches from other parts of our land never found in the theatres of our cities? It is very doubtful whether a single theatre could be sustained for a month in this city if it were not for the patronage of strangers. But if this be the fact, then the importance of revivals here, of a healthful, constant, unceasing heavenly influence in all our churches, is apparent. To influence the stranger Christian; to incline his heart more and more to the ways of God; to keep

him from temptation when here; and to send him back to his home, blessed not only by our hospitality, but with more of the Spirit of his Master, we should pray unceasingly for the descending influences of the grace of God on all our churches and on all the population of this city. To save the stranger that comes among us from the dram-shop, the theatre, the house of infamy, we should beseech the God of heaven that he may be greeted when he comes here with the influence of religion; that every Christian whom he may meet may show that his heart is deeply engaged in the work of the Lord, and feels a deep interest in the salvation of souls; and that throughout all our cities and towns there may be felt the power of the presence of the GOD OF REVIVALS.

SERMON IV.

THE DESIRABLENESS OF REVIVALS.

"O, LORD, REVIVE THY WORK IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS, IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS MAKE KNOWN; IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY." Hab. iii. 2.

THE sentiment of this text, in the connection in which it stands, is, that a revival of pure religion was desirable; and particularly in view of the awful judgments of God, and the manifestations of his majesty and justice which the prophet saw in vision. God is seen by the prophet approaching amidst many terrors to take vengeance on the wicked. His glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. His brightness is as the light; and there are bright beams (marg.) like playing lightnings at his side. Before him goes the pestilence, and burning coals at his feet. The nations are driven asunder; and the everlasting mountains are scattered; the perpetual hills bow; and the deep lifts up its voice. The sun and the moon stand still in their habitation; and

the universe is in consternation at the awful presence of JEHOVAH. In view of these sublime and awful manifestations, the prophet pleads with God to revive his work, and to remember mercy in the midst of wrath. It was only by a revival of religion that his wrath could be averted, or that his people could be prepared for these sublime exhibitions of their God.

I shall take occasion from these words to address you on the desirableness of revivals of religion, particularly in cities; and shall endeavour to adhere so far, at least, to the sentiment of the text, as to keep before the eye the desirableness of such works of grace from the awful displays of Divine Justice which the inhabitants of guilty cities have reason to apprehend. My last lecture on this general subject was on the *importance* of cities and large towns, particularly with reference to religion. My design in this discourse is to state some reasons why such works of grace as I have endeavoured to describe, as included under the word REVIVALS, are desirable in such places.

Who doubts this? it may at once be asked; and what is the necessity of discoursing on so plain a topic to a Christian people? Are there any Christians who doubt that a revival of pure

religion in a city is desirable? And can there be a necessity to occupy the time of an entire service on a point where there can be but one opinion? These questions, I doubt not, would be asked by many, in a candid and not a captious spirit; and they demand an answer in the same spirit. In a word, then, I would reply, 1. That men often admit that to be true, in relation to which they have little feeling or emotion; and my wish, in regard to a large portion of my hearers, is not so much to convince their understandings on so plain a point, as to enkindle in the heart an earnest *desire* for such works of mercy. It may be that the main point of my discourse would be at once admitted to be true without argument; but it may be, also, that its force may be more deeply felt by the contemplation of the views which I shall exhibit. 2. To the candid questions which I have supposed to be submitted to me at the outset of my argument, I wish also to propose one or two in reply, in a spirit and manner *as* candid and as free from captiousness. Is it true, then, that *all* professed Christians really desire a revival of religion of the kind which I have described? Are there none who start back at the word REVIVAL, and who feel an instinctive dislike to the name? Are

there none in whose minds the word suggests the idea of mere excitement, of scenes of enthusiasm and disorder, of irregularity and wildfire? Are there none who, when they pray, and with very honest intentions in the main, for a revival, do it with many qualifications and mental reservations, and with an apprehension or fear that the prayer *may* be answered; who pray from the custom of using such language, rather than from any intelligent and sincere wish that such scenes as that on the day of Pentecost may be witnessed? And I cannot but ask one more question. When prayers are offered *for* revivals, are there no prayers against them? While the fervent petitions of a portion of an assembled church ascend to heaven for the descent of the Holy Spirit like floods and showers, are there no prayers ascending to heaven, or no secret desires, that such influences may be restrained? no *counter* petitions that cross and recross the prayers of those who love revivals, as they ascend up to God? It is not given to men to know the hearts, nor the real feelings and desires of the professed people of God; but if it could be ascertained, it would not be uninteresting to know what portion of professed Christians, in deep and fervent sincerity, daily pray, "O Lord, revive thy work!"

I do not consider it, therefore, superfluous to state some reasons why revivals of religion are desirable.

But what would be the scene, should there be a revival of religion in a city like this? I have, on a former occasion, explained at length my views of the nature of a revival. To the success of my argument at this time, it is quite material that we have some distinct idea of what would actually occur in such a case.

IT WOULD NOT BE MERE EXCITEMENT. I have no fondness for mere excitement: I do not advocate it. Indeed, a very large part of my ministerial labours is directed *against* excitement, and intended to allay and restrain its feverishness. I refer to the agitations produced by the love of gain, and those which are exhibited in the political world, and in the excited and excitable world of gaiety and fashion. I have never uttered a word in favour of disorder, lawlessness, irregularity, eccentricity, or of any religious movement which would be a violation of decency and order. I am no advocate for suspending the proper business of life, or of breaking in upon regular employment in honest and honourable industry. I have no views of religion or of revivals which would not make men more sober, and honest,

and industrious, and chastened in their lives. I have not one word to say in disregard of the urbanities and civilities of social life, of the respect due to rank and office; not one word to say in favour of what has sometimes been charged on the promoters of revivals—falsely in general—a contempt for the courtesies of life, and an outrage on the feelings of others. I hold no views of religion which would not make men more courteous, refined, and truly polite and respectful *in* revivals and at all times. I advocate no excitement but that which truth produces, and not half as much as prevails in the gay world; I advocate the necessity for no new doctrines to carry on such a work,—no doctrines but such as were preached by the Redeemer and his apostles; I advocate no means and measures but such as are best adapted to secure to the Gospel—the pure Gospel—access to the human heart, and such as are in accordance with all the settled institutions of Christianity; and I advocate no style of preaching that is vulgar in diction or action; that is offensive to good taste in tone and manner; that is not the result of careful preparation; that is not characterized by the condensation of as much truth as can be made, to reach the hearts of men; no preaching where the

preacher is not much impressed, as conscious of his awful charge, and anxious mainly that the flock he feeds should feel it too.

What effects, then, should we anticipate from a general revival of religion in a city? There are in this city, for illustration, and its surrounding districts and liberties, somewhere about twenty-six thousand families. What is the character of a large portion of them, I need not now pause to say. Now the effect of a revival of religion that should pervade the whole population, would be seen at once in those families, and in all the influences that go from the family hearth and altar, and would be diffused from those centres over all the walks of life. Every family, if religion were to diffuse its influence there, would be a family of prayer. The morning and the evening sacrifice would ascend to God. Grateful praise would be poured on the ear of JEHOVAH in all these dwellings, as the beams of the new morning sun diffuse their radiance over the world; and in the stillness of the evening, the works and duties of the day again performed, the interesting group would come around the altar again to render praise, and to commend themselves to the protecting care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps. Each day they would go forth to its

duties and trials consecrated by the morning offering of praise and prayer under the protection of the unslumbering eye of God, in each scene of sorrow or night of calamity they would bow submissively to his will. Children would be taught; taught in proper human learning; taught the Bible; taught the ways of virtue, religion, temperance, purity, and industry; taught to fear the name of God, to hate a lie, to prepare for an honourable career in the various walks of life. The Sabbath would return to bless each household with its influences of mercy; and the sanctuary would deepen the lessons of family instruction; and the universal rest from toil would be a sweet type of the heavenly world. Temperance would be promoted; and the fountains of poison that now flow everywhere to corrupt and destroy, would be closed for ever. The houses of pollution and infamy would no more open to allure and decoy the young to death; and their inmates, made living and pure members of the body of Christ, would be preparing to walk before him in white robes in heaven. The theatre would no more open its doors to invite the young, the stranger, and the defenceless to forget a father's prayers and a mother's counsels, and to become the companion of the unprincipled and the vile.

Sober industry would take the place of idleness; chastity the place of impurity; hope would irradiate the countenance where now sits vacancy or despair; intelligence would take the place of ignorance; plenty and comfort would succeed to want; decency of apparel to penury and rags; beauty and health would revisit the countenance now bloated and haggard; and peace, the heart that now hath woe and sorrow from intemperance; thought—sober, rich, pure, heavenly thought,—would succeed to gaiety; honesty to fraud; integrity to baseness; universal charity to suspicion, inuendo, and slander; and a disposition to do good to all, and to spread the Gospel around the world with all its healing influences, would succeed the disposition to spend the wealth which God gives in the scenes of dissipation, revelry, and sin. Talent that now is wasted and blasted by sensuality, or perverted by ambition; genius whose fires are now kindled, and which now burn for nought, would be converted to noble purposes. That vigour of frame which is now wasted in scenes of dissipation, would prepare itself to brave the snows of the north or the sands of the equator, in making known a Saviour's love; and from lips where now heavy curses roll, the Gospel would soon whisper peace.

Meantime a revival of religion would destroy or injure nothing that is truly valuable. It would not interfere with one rational enjoyment. It would not close one school. It would not diminish the interest in an orphan asylum, a hospital, a college, a charitable endowment, but would augment the interest in all. It would moor no ship to the wharf; arrest no car, and no steam-boat,—*except on the Sabbath;* and stay none of the wheels of commerce or of honourable and honest enterprise.

In one word, "a reformation extending to every house in the city would be the noblest sight the lover of humanity ever saw. The reign of vice which now regards no limit, but throws its malign influence within every enclosure, would on all sides be curtailed. The horrid clang of profaneness, the bloated features of dissipation, the haggard spectacle of prostitution, the inanity of vicious idleness, the menace of unbridled passion, of deliberate revenge, curtained behind human features, and heard remote, sometimes like thunders on the bosom of darkness—in short, the conflicts of interest, the wiles of dishonesty, the deep-laid snares of covetousness," which now meet us on every hand, would disappear. Two hundred thousand immortal beings,

a large portion of whom are now pressing hard on each other in the broad and much-trodden way to death, now with conflicting interests and agitated passions, would at once commence the march to immortality. Hand in hand, with peaceful step and tranquil heart,—with many songs of praise and many prayers,—they would tread along the banks of the river of life, calm in view of the shadowy vale of death; elevated with the hope of immortal peace.

Our main inquiry now returns. Would such a work of grace be desirable in a city like this, or in any or all of the cities of our land? In answer to this inquiry,

1. I suggest, first, the influence of a city on the country at large. I need not attempt to prove that that influence is vast. In all that pertains to fashion, to literature, to morals, to religion, the influence of a city is incalculable. A large part of the fashions of the land, embracing a great many questions about economy and the proper modes and objects of life, and about *honesty*, too, in contracting and paying debts, are controlled by cities. Paris, on one subject, has given law to the most of Europe and of the world; and this city influences hundreds of thousands of immortal beings, either directly or indi-

rectly, in the same manner. Say what we will, a large portion of mankind is guided by what is implied by the word *fashion*. Who can estimate the importance, therefore, of such an influence of religion as shall effectually check extravagance of life, and turn the thoughts of men to the sober objects for which they should live? On the *literature* of a people, no less than on its fashions, cities give law extensively. A large portion of the light reading of the world is formed, first, for the inhabitants of cities, and then for those portions of the country that can be made to imitate them. From cities, as from centres goes forth that vast amount of romance and poetry which is doing so much to undermine all just morality in this nation, and to destroy the souls of men. The prevalence of pure Christianity in our cities, pervading all hearts, would arrest to a great extent this influence, and turn the attention of men to subjects more worthy of their immortal nature. The power of the newspaper press in cities is felt also throughout the land. It gives tone and character to thousands of presses in the smaller towns and villages. Who can estimate the effect that *would* be produced, if there was such a religious influence in cities as should make those fountains always

pure? Such it *would be*, if the sentiments of the community were right; and one general revival of religion in our cities that should secure such an influence on the press as should close every newspaper establishment on the Sabbath; as should exclude all commendation of the theatre, and as should banish every advertisement and sentiment, such as a Christian father would be unwilling his sons or daughters should read, would send an influence throughout the land.

I need not say that the influence of a city is direct, and almost omnipotent on a large circle of surrounding villages. Could the mighty population, which, in the summer months, is poured out from our cities on the Sabbath by steam-boats, and cars, and other vehicles, be restrained by the influence of religion; could they be induced to enter the sanctuary themselves, and spend the day in the worship of God, what a change would be produced at once in a wide circle of towns around us! How peaceful to them would the Sabbath become! What a corrupting influence would be at once withdrawn! Then, indeed, a village near a city would not be regarded as necessarily accursed. Then it would not have occasion to complain of the obvious *injustice* done by its overgrown neighbour, in pouring forth its

legions of the profane, the unprincipled and the intemperate, to disturb the peace and corrupt the morals of others.

I observed also, before, that in a large city almost every portion of the land has its representatives. From all parts of the country and the world they come for business or for pleasure. Who can calculate what would be the influence of a general revival of religion in those minds, and on the portions of the land from whence they came? The revival in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost was felt almost immediately in all parts of the then-known world, by the return of the "strangers" who were converted there. There is scarcely one nook or corner of our vast republic that would not be influenced by such a work of grace. Cities in a nation are like the heart in man. Each stroke at the centre of life sends out influences for good or evil to the extremities, and is felt with healthful or destructive influence there. I need not add, if this be so, how responsible is the work of Christian ministry here! how solemn the obligations of every member of the church of Christ!

II. A second consideration to which I refer, is the worth of the souls of the multitudes congregated in cities. I by no means mean to be under-

stood as saying that a soul is of more value here than elsewhere; of any more worth in the most splendid mansion than in the humblest abode of the poor. But what I wish to say is, that we may be more deeply affected with their value: we may become more deeply impressed with a sense of their danger. The scene itself is more impressive: the events that are passing daily before the eyes are better adapted to affect the heart. Immortal beings are crowded together; the busy, thoughtless multitude is constantly moving on before the eyes. The dense throng is passing by, regardless of admonition, and deaf to entreaty and to warning. A man travelling over an uncultivated prairie, or a waste of sands, might meet here and there, at far distant intervals, a stranger—and then pass on again amidst the lonely wastes. There would be little to rouse the mind in regard to the necessity of a mighty heavenly influence on the soul of the solitary man; and if he were disposed to present to him the subject of religion, there would be nothing in the circumstances to crowd it from the mind. But when a *city* is entered, how different is the scene! I look out of my window, and the dense throng of all ages and conditions rushes on. Strangers to me and to each other, they are moving on, an

unbroken procession all the day to eternity. I pass by the door of a theatre, and hundreds of immortal beings, thoughtless and unconcerned about the future, are leaving the place of amusement and corruption. I go into the marts of business, and there is a dense and jostling crowd anxious only for gain. I think of the brilliant party, and of the assembly-room, and there is another throng "with steps light and airy as the footsteps of Aurora," not less regardless of their immortal destiny. I think of the glitter of dress there, and the splendour of apartments, and the charms of music, and the brilliancy of wit, and the gracefulness of the dance, and all these are unconcerned about their undying doom. I think of the low places of sensuality and wretchedness; of beastly intemperance, and of degrading vice, and there is another group equally regardless of their immortal destiny. Wherever you go, a dense throng surrounds you—a busy, active, restless, *unhappy*, dissatisfied multitude; a vast procession going to the grave—all under sentence of death—all sinners—all exposed to the eternal wrath of God. Each one of them has a soul whose value no numbers can compute; a soul of more worth than all the riches which commercial talent, all combined, has ever gained or ever can

gain in this city, and which shall live in bliss or in woe when all that wealth shall be forgotten. Of their high powers, of their immortal destiny, of what God the Saviour has done for them, they are unconscious; or if they are conscious, they disregard it all. They are living for other objects; and their attention can by *no human means* be turned to the subject of their own soul's salvation.

Now it is not madness to ask where they will be a thousand years hence; nor to inquire what is probably to be their doom? Infidelity may sneer at such a suggestion; and stupidity may laugh; but a heathen monarch wept at the thought that his army, the greatest that had been ever raised, would be dead in a hundred years; and a greater than any heathen monarch wept over the destiny of a great and guilty population passing on like this to the bar of God. All the great interests of this thoughtless throng lie beyond the tomb. If they have none there, their life is a bubble, a vapour, a gorgeous illusion, a changing cloud, a mist on the mountain side. All in which they are now so busy is soon to vanish away. Whether they are rich or poor, honoured or despised, bond or free, caressed or hated, can make no difference with them in a few years. Whether there is an eternity or not, these things are of

trifling importance. How soon is the most exquisite earthly pleasure passed! The charm of the sweetest melody, how soon it dies away on the ear! The tenderest ties of friendship, how soon are they severed! The most princely wealth, how soon must it be left! The widest reputation, how soon must we cease to enjoy it! And so with the bitterest grief, the keenest sorrow, the most agonizing pain, how soon is it gone! And of what real importance are all these to the throng that is seeking them as the grand business of life? The vapour that you see in the morning as it lies on the mountain side, of what importance can it be whether it be admired by a few more or a few less mortals, or whether it roll a little higher or a little lower, since it will soon vanish in the beams of the morning sun? So of the vapour of life. Soon is it gone; and another generation shall succeed; as to-morrow another short-lived mist shall be seen, where to-day that vanished away. The cloud that you see lie along the western sky as the sun sinks behind the hills in a summer's eve, so gorgeous, so changing, so beautiful, so lighted up with ever-varying richness of hue by the lightning of the summer eve, of what importance is it whether a few more or less tints be painted on it, or whether a few more or a few less

eyes gaze upon it, for the darkness of midnight will soon conceal it all. The insects that you see flutter in the evening rays, so happy, so calm, so still, so graceful in their motions, are moving with the shades of night to be seen no more. So move on the dense, the busy multitudes of this city! And I was about to say, O that they *were*, like the vapour, to vanish for ever; or that gorgeous cloud, to sink unconsciously into night; or the insects of the evening, to live no more! But it is not so. That vapour vanishes, and is not seen again. That changing cloud is dissipated; and the tiny nations die, not to live again. But not so with the multitudes here. To the shades of the night of death they move on, but they emerge in an immortal existence beyond; and all their great interests are there. There they begin to live. There they will live on when stars and suns cease to shine, and when rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away; when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and when the throne of God occupied by the dread Eternal King, shall be revealed. Yes, thoughtless trifler, yes, as long as God is to endure you are to live; and as sure as it is that God himself shall never die, so sure it is that *your* soul shall never cease to exist.

Now who can say that it would be irrational

or undesirable that all this multitude should be simultaneously impressed with the importance of religion and the worth of the soul? Suppose it should be attended with a temporary suspension of the business, or with a permanent suspension of what now constitutes the main pleasures of this life. Is it to be deemed fanatical that the affairs of this life should be allowed to give way, for a little while, for the more important things of another world? Is this world of darkness and of sin so vastly important that none of its affairs are ever to be suspended for the purposes of another world? Is the struggle for place and power and wealth never to be arrested to attend to more important interests? I do not believe that a general revival of religion in our cities would interfere really with any thing necessary to their prosperity, or would cause even a temporary suspension of any thing truly valuable to the welfare of society. But if it did, shall man say that these things are *never* to be suspended to attend to more important concerns? Not thus determines the great Law-giver of men, and the best judge of what is needful for human welfare. If *his* judgment were followed, and his counsel and command obeyed, *all* labour would be suspended for one day in seven. The counting-room,

the assembly-room, the places of amusement every where would be closed; the steam-boat, the car, the stage-coach, would stand still; the axe, the hammer, and the chisel would be laid aside; and the world, calm and peaceful like Eden, would give itself to the labours of charity, and to a preparation for heaven. Does GOD never arrest the active movements of the world in any other way? What does he when the stout man is laid on a bed of pain? What means the scene when all his worldly plans are arrested, and he is pale in death? The truth is, if man's great interests are beyond the tomb, no law of propriety is violated if these great interests are allowed to press upon the soul, and even to arrest, if need be, his incessant care for worldly gain and for fame.

But there would be excitement, it may be said, if this great multitude were to attend to the subject of religion, and if there were a general revival. There are excitements, it is said, in all revivals. But, I pray you, is there no excitement in these cities now? From whence comes the objection that revivals are mere scenes of excitement? From that man *excited* throughout the whole week in pursuit of gain—feverish and restless, and unacquainted for one whole hour at a time with calm thought and repose; from

that man whose life is spent in the whirlwind of political controversy or in the career of ambition; from that calm and interesting group preparing for the splendid party and the dance. O *there* all is calm and serene; but in religion all is excitement and commotion! Well may this objection be heard from the excited, agitated, tumultuous population of a city; a population more than any other on earth living in scenes of excitement; unhappy when they are not excited; fostering every where the means of excitement; and resisting all the means which the friends of religion can use to bring them to sober thought and calm reflection. What we aim at is that this excitement may be laid aside, and that the now busy multitude may be brought to *think soberly* about the immortal destiny beyond the tomb. We aim that they may lay down the exciting romance or novel, and take up the Bible—full of sober truth; that they may forsake the theatre—a place of mere excitement, and find happiness in the calmness of the closet, and the sober employments of the fire-side; that they may turn away from the agitating scenes of political strife, and from the exciting of envy, and malice, and green-eyed jealousy, and ambition, and from the intoxicating bowl and the dance of pleasure, and

devote themselves to the sober business of religion. Excitement, say you, in a revival! O, if Christ required me to endeavour to produce such an excitement in a revival as I see every day in this city; if he required that men should give themselves up to the mere influence of feeling, and day-dreams, and agitating passions, and unfounded hopes, as they are required to by the world; I should expect to hear the objection that it was all mere excitement, and that such a work could not be the work of God. But no. I plead for soberness of thought; for calm investigation; for a state of mind where every improper emotion may be allayed, and where the soul may be brought to look calmly and soberly at the great realities of eternity. Do I address one here who does not know that such sober feeling would become the condition of man, and that it is desirable that such deep emotion should take the place of the agitated and tumultuous feelings which reign in a great community like this?

III. A revival of religion is desirable in cities in order to avert the wrath of God and save them from the judgments of heaven. Evils pour into our great cities like floods from all quarters of the world; and who can be ignorant of the doom of cities in times past? It has been on cities that

the most fearful of all the plagues of heaven have fallen; and not a few dilapidated walls, or half-ruined temples, stand now amidst far extended ruins as monuments of the wrath of heaven. Not a few have been blotted out, and the places where they stood made pools of water or uninhabitable deserts, by the vengeance of heaven. Who can forget Sodom and Gomorrah, or Babylon, or Tyre, or Thebes, or Memphis, or Petra? And who can be ignorant of the desolations by plague and the pestilence that have swept through these abodes of congregated human guilt? The reason has been that God could smite *many* guilty there while few of the innocent would suffer. All over the world the principal monuments of the divine vengeance have been cities and large towns. Long may the walls of a city stand, but death shall have done its last work within; long may temples, like that at Baalbec, stand, while all the worshippers, long since smitten by the wrath of God, may sleep with the dead; long may a city be marked out and distinguished by its ruins and its sepulchres, like Petra, without a solitary living inhabitant—a city of the dead. All over the ancient world the plains are strewed with the ruins of cities,—the monuments of indignant

heaven against their follies, their pride, their luxury, and their sensuality.

We know what would have saved them. Ten righteous men would have saved one of the worst of them. Nineveh was saved by repentance; Babylon might have been spared if she had humbled herself; and Jerusalem would have been saved if she had not crucified the Son of God. Religion promoting to temperance, and industry, and chastity, and honesty, and prayer, would have saved Babylon, and Tadmor, and Tyre, and Ephesus, and Alexandria, and Athens; and, occupying as they did the most eligible situations on earth for commerce, they might to-day have been splendid cities smiling under the favour of the Almighty.

And what can save the cities of our land? The same thing only that would have saved Gomorrah and Babylon. Let us not dream that they are beyond the wrath of God. Let us not suppose that the eyes of God are closed on the enormous masses of guilt in these abodes of congregated sinners. Babylon was once as secure as we are, and as confident of her future glory as we can be of the prosperity of this beautiful city.

The inhabitants of Rome once breathed as pure

an air as we do, and Tyre commanded as wide a commerce as any sea-port in our land. The God who turned Babylon into standing pools and made wild beasts cry in her desolate houses, and satyrs dance there, (Isa. xiii. 21, 22), and who has caused the *malaria* to settle around Rome, spreading death on the once healthful plains of Italy, and has made Tyre a barren rock where the solitary fisherman dries his net, can as easily destroy *our* commerce, or fill our streets with pestilential air. Have our aged men forgotten the sad desolations of 1793, when the angel of death walked through these streets as he did once in the camp of Sennacherib? Have *we* ceased to remember the scenes in 1832, when the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day spread a universal gloom over this city? How easy for that God to visit us again!

IV. I refer to one other consideration, showing the desirableness of revivals of religion in the cities of our land. I refer to their influence on future times. The question whether revivals of religion may exist there, and in what way they may be promoted, is of not less importance than any other which pertains to the welfare of our nation. Look over the map of our country.

Only about two hundred years have elapsed since the foot of the pilgrim first trod these western shores. Then a vast interminable forest spread its shades all over this land—broken in upon only by the prairies or the lakes that opened their bosom to the sun, or by the floods that rolled on to the ocean. There the sound of the woodman's axe had not been heard. The vast solitude had been disturbed only by the savage war-cry. Not a bridge was thrown over the streams; not a road penetrated the deep forest; not a sail whitened these bays and seas; not a boat save the fragile bark of birch, was upon the waters; not a city sent its hum up to heaven; not a village, save the temporary abodes of wandering savages, was on the vast landscape. Two centuries have gone, and how changed the scene! Our cities already rival those of the old world; and when some half a dozen on other continents are named, ours come next in the numbers of their population, and are already among the first in commercial importance. As if by magic they start up all over the land; and even while the remains of the forest stand around them, palaces rise, and wealth flows there as to a centre, and the din of commerce is heard afar.

Can any one fail to see in this fact the neces-

sity of revivals of religion in those cities? How else shall it be propagated, but by that rapid mode where the Spirit of God bears the truth to the hearts of multitudes, and turns them simultaneously to God? They are adapted to the excited and ardent movement everywhere manifested in our land. All in those cities is free, and generous, and active, and mighty. There is an energy and zeal in the affairs of the world, which is fitted to make men great and glorious in religion as in commerce. There is an ardour that needs only to be directed to the concerns of the soul, to be adapted to the times in which we live, and to the great enterprise of the conversion of the world.

What vast multitudes are yet to swarm in those cities! What countless numbers are there to live and to die! How soon will the present busy generation be gone, to give place to another as busy, as active, as immortal! What is to be the doom of the advancing millions? That inquiry is to be answered in part by the character of the present generation, and by the answer to the question, whether the Spirit of God shall descend in glorious revivals of religion. In these streets other generations are to tread—as busy as

we are. They will occupy the stores which you now occupy; dwell in the houses where you now dwell—until the time shall come for them to pull down those houses and stores, and to build new ones for other generations to come. They will moor their vessels to the same wharfs—until those vessels shall be useless, and shall give place to others. They will go forth and look upon our graves; read the letters on our tombs until they become illegible: and then *they* will lie down in the grave, to be superseded, and in their turn, too, to be forgotten. Unless some judgment is stirred up in heaven, "red with uncommon wrath," that shall sweep this city with the besom of destruction, more millions by far may yet live *here* than now comprise the whole inhabitants of our country. *We* are just beginning our career. The cities of our land are just starting into being. In the far-distant future I see the shadowy forms of advancing millions of men. They are coming to enter into our houses, and churches, and stores, and to receive their impressions from what they shall find there when they arrive.

Now what I wish to say is, that these cities can be saved from being corrupting spots; con-

centrated pests in our land, only by the influence of religion; and religion now. Tell me, ye who doubt this, whether power and wealth saved Babylon and Rome. Tell me whether the ship laden with gold and the merchandise of the East saved Tyre. Tell me whether philosophy and learning saved the cities of Greece and Egypt. Tell me whether the chisel of Phidias and Praxiteles saved Athens. Tell me whether the Colosseum saved Rome, or its splendid marble structures saved Corinth. O no,—not one of them: nor will colleges, or schools, or marble palaces, or fountains, or luxury, or wealth, save one of the cities of our land. Without religion they will lie as corrupt and corrupting masses on the bosom of the nation, till heaven can bear it no longer; and then *they* will be swept with the vengeance of an offended God. Religion, religion only—the pure religion of the cross—descending like floods, and flowing like rivers, only can save these cities from destruction. When we think of these things; when we look over the numbers of the cities of our land; when we remember their accumulating guilt; when we look onward to future times, and see what they are destined yet to be, and backward and see

the memorials of wrath standing thick where cities once stood on the plains of the old world, how appropriate the petition of our text, "O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK, IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS, IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS MAKE KNOWN; IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY!"

SERMON V.

THE HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

"AND WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY AND WEPT OVER IT, SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN, EVEN THOU, AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG TO THY PEACE." Luke xix. 41, 42.

"O JERUSALEM! JERUSALEM! THOU THAT KILLEST THE PROPHETS, AND STONEST THEM WHICH ARE SENT UNTO THEE, HOW OFTEN WOULD I HAVE GATHERED THY CHILDREN TOGETHER, EVEN AS A HEN GATHERETH HER CHICKENS UNDER HER WINGS, AND YE WOULD NOT!" Matt. xxiii. 37.

WHAT tender and affectionate language is this! What love and compassion are here evinced! What a scene is here presented! THE SON OF GOD IN TEARS! The Redeemer weeping in view of the impending doom of a great and guilty city! Why were those tears? And why these expressions of love and tenderness? It is not difficult to answer the questions. In no situation can we well conceive of more emotions crowding

into a human bosom than struggled in the heart of the Son of God, and that constrained him to weep. Before him was the capital of the nation; the temple was standing with rich magnificence; the altar of sacrifice; the place where the praises of JEHOVAH had been celebrated for ages. In that city he had preached the Gospel, and called the inhabitants to embrace him as the Messiah; but in vain. There he sought to turn them to God, and thus to avert the heavy doom impending over them for their sins; but all in vain. He had been there rejected, his ministry despised, and his claims set at nought; and he saw that there the great act of national crime, which outpeers all other deeds of guilt, was about to be perpetrated—by his own murder; and that for these things the city was to be filled soon with woe, and blood, and horror; the temple fired and razed to its foundations; the imposing rites of religion to cease; and the inhabitants of the city and the land that should survive the siege to be borne into captivity, or scattered to the ends of the world, to be re-gathered to the land of their fathers no more. More than this, he saw heavy judgments impending over them as sinners, and the fearful doom awaiting the rejecters of the Son of God in the future world. For these things

his eyes ran down with tears; and of all the scenes of moral grandeur ever witnessed in this world, none have equalled that when the Son of God, seated on the Mount of Olives, cast his eyes over the city spread out before him, and gave vent to his feeling in a flood of tears.

I see no reason to doubt that, if he were again on earth, he would evince the same feelings in surveying the great cities that now exist. I doubt not that in Paris, in London, in Canton, in New York, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Cincinnati, he would see much that would peculiarly excite to tears. I do not see why Jerusalem was so pre-eminent either in numbers, in wickedness, or in the approaching doom of its inhabitants, as to claim exclusively the compassion and call forth the tears of the Son of God. The same thing substantially will be found to exist in all these cities as in Jerusalem; the same combined resistance of himself and his Gospel; the same concentrated wickedness; the same accumulation of vice, licentiousness, pride, and sensuality; and the same awful doom impending over the congregated masses of guilt. *One* reason of his weeping then was, that his Gospel had been there so unsuccessful. He had preached in Galilee; he had trod the shore of the lake of Gennesareth:

he had proclaimed his message in numerous country villages, and among the hamlets of the poor, with eminent success. But in the great towns, in Capernaum, in Bethsaida, in Chorazin, and pre-eminently in Jerusalem, he had met with peculiar obstacles to the success of the Gospel; and which in one case called forth the heaviest denunciations which ever fell from his lips: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida;" and which in the other excited him now to tears!

I derive from the text the sentiment that Christ found peculiar obstacles to the reception of his Gospel in cities and large towns, and my object at this time is to show what some of those obstacles are. My last lecture was on the importance of revivals of religion in cities and large towns: the present lecture will be a continuation of the same subject in general, or another aspect of it, by showing the peculiar hinderances to religion existing there, and hence the importance and necessity of REVIVALS to meet and overcome those hinderances.

I. I invite your attention, in the first place, to the obstacles to revivals arising from the very constitution or organization of cities and large towns. The idea which I wish to present is, that there is a large portion of the population

that is almost entirely inaccessible by the Gospel, or decidedly beyond the reach of the ordinary means of grace.

"God made the country, and man made the town," said the sweetest of British bards, though in this case with perhaps rather more truth than poetic beauty. Christ found, as has already been observed, a country and a village population accessible to the Gospel, and the triumphs of his personal ministry were mainly there. There are few, comparatively, of very elevated rank there; few in affluence. There are fewer low and debasing vices; few comparatively of the more fascinating allurements; few extended and compacted combinations of guilt; few to whom and to whose dwellings those who are disposed to do good may not find a welcome and ready access.

But the moment you enter a city, with all its external beauty and splendour, with all its courtesy and refinement, with all its science and art, nay, with all its healthful institutions of morality and religion, you are struck with the almost entire exclusion of the *extremes* of the population from all access by the Gospel and the means of grace. On the one hand there is that vast portion of a city population which may be regarded as the *lower stratum* of society,—I mean that dense and

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prisons; the paupers in our alms-houses, most of them made such by intemperance; the beggars patrolling our streets, whose story is, in general, but a veil to their faults; but most of all, of that numerous banditti of thieves, robbers, swindlers, pilferers, incendiaries, burglars, and ruffians, whose concealment from the public eye alone prevents alarm—the thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, who are here congregated and affiliated in various ways in infamy and crime, and he will be at no loss to understand some of the obstacles which exist here to the spread of all religion, and especially to revivals.

A very large portion of this class is inaccessible by any means which are used, or which can be at present used, to spread among them the Gospel. They enter no church from year to year. Many an individual has lived more than twenty years in this city and never entered a place of public worship. Multitudes of them have no Bible; or if they had, they could not read it, or would immediately pawn it to procure the means of intoxication. Multitudes of them spurn a tract, or if they did not, it would be useless to them. Multitudes of them study concealment; practise crimes which cannot be exposed to the light of

day; and alike shrink away from a police officer and from a minister of religion.

But I wish especially to remark, not on their inaccessibility, but on the fact that they are not in a condition where revivals of religion can be expected, such as I am advocating, and such as have hitherto, in general, blessed this land. The most powerful revivals of religion in this country have occurred in those places where the mass of the people are the best educated, and where they are most sober in their lives, most virtuous and industrious, and regular in their attendance on the house of God. But this has not been the general character of revivals in this land. They have been the fruits of sound instruction, and of a careful training in common schools and in Sabbath schools; they have occurred where the Gospel has been long and faithfully preached, and those who have been converted have been usually those whose minds have been most sedulously taught by the labours of the ministry; they have occurred eminently in our colleges and higher female seminaries—places far removed from mere enthusiasm, and places where God has made intellectual culture contribute to the purity and power of revivals. But how different all this from

the wretched, untaught, and degraded population of our cities! Even, therefore, if we had access to this immense mass; if we had ministers enough to go to them and preach; or if every Christian should become a missionary to them, and bear the tidings of salvation, their very ignorance and degradation would oppose a most formidable barrier to pure revivals of religion. That dark mass must be elevated; these hordes of wandering and wretched children must be gathered into schools and taught; these fountains of poison, now pouring desolation and woe into so many dwellings, must be closed; the Bible must be placed in these houses, and the inmates taught to read it; and a long process of most self-denying instruction must be gone into, before, in our cities, there will be witnessed the revivals of purity and power which have so abundantly blessed the smaller towns and the villages of our land.

I have spoken of the low and degraded part of our population as opposing one obstacle to revivals. This is one extreme. And here is one great department of Christian effort where all our prayers and all our self-denial are demanded.

But there is another class at the other extreme of society, in our cities, that is not less inaccessible by the Gospel of Christ. It is that great

department 'far above these augean stables of sin and pain, which no Herculean labour can cleanse, but connected with it by innumerable doors and headlong steps. This region appears brilliant and fair; its precincts resound with hilarity, music, and songs; and it contains thousands of the opulent, the fashionable, and the gay; vice is clad in splendour here, and a spirit reigns which knows no moral law but inclination, and recognizes no god but pleasure.' For guilt often treads flowery paths, and goes up the heights of honour and ambition. It reclines on a couch of ease; rests on a bed of down; puts on robes of adorning; is seen in the joyousness of the mazy dance; and moves amidst the civilities and courtesies of refined life. For this class distant climes pour in their luxuries; the theatre opens its doors; splendid mansions rise—the cost of tens of thousands of dollars—with gorgeous decorations, to furnish places for dancing and revelry; for this class art is exhausted; night becomes more brilliant.than day; and the cup of pleasure is drunk deep and long, and music lavishes her charms to give pleasure to the ear and joy to the heart. In such circles we look in vain for prayer; for the serious reading of the Bible; for an anxious concern for the soul; for a humble and penitent sit-

ting at the feet of the Redeemer. And we look as really in vain there for solid happiness. What are often the characteristics of such circles? It is a world of splendour without enjoyment; of professions without sincerity; of flattery without heart; of gaiety which mocks the real feelings of the soul; and of smiles when the heart is full of envy and chagrin; a cup of hilarity whose dregs are wormwood and gall; scenes of momentary pleasure to be succeeded by long nights of painful reminiscences and by despair. There is "restless pride without gratification; ostentation without motive or reward; ceremony without comfort; laughter without joy; smiles which conceal rancour; vociferous praise alloyed with envy, and dying away with the whispers of calumny;" and compliance with the laws of fashion which are hated; and a servitude to customs where the chains eat deep into the flesh. Think you that these people, "whose every step appears light and airy as the radiant footstep of Aurora,—whose very form and features are luminous with contentment and hope," are happy? Do they live on in a continual round of unmingled enjoyment? No. The immortal mind is not thus made. The brilliance of these things strikes the eye, but conveys no pleasure to the heart; and in the very

midst of all this external show and glitter, the conscience, true to itself and to God, may be uttering the language of rebuke, and the recollection of all this folly may bathe the cheek and the pillow in tears.

But my principal object is not to remark on the folly of these scenes: for, so far as their fellow-mortals are concerned, men and women have a right to spend their money and be as foolish as they please; nor do I wish to remark on the hollowness of all this, and its destitution of happiness, but on the fact that it stands in the way of revivals, and of religion, in all forms. Unlike the other description of the population of a city already adverted to, in most respects they are like them in this. Thousands of them are as ignorant of the Gospel as they are. The Bible is indeed in their habitations, but it is not read; not because they cannot read it, but because they will not. They enter no sanctuary; and no one bears the Gospel to them.

A nominal connection may be held with some Christian congregation to secure some right of burial—for there is some thinking about death as a matter in which property is involved—but they are strangers to the house of God. Many a splendid mansion in this city is tenanted by those

who enter no house of worship. And who carries the Gospel to them? Who tells them that they have a soul? Who reminds them that they are going to the judgment-bar, or to hell? Alas! the messenger that bears the tract to the humble mansion of the poor, is often turned rudely away from the splendid abode of the rich. The minister of religion goes not there; for to do it would be to violate a law of etiquette, which, as a stranger, he may not disregard; or, if he goes, daunted, it may be, by wealth, and splendid furniture, and rank, and perhaps by high intellectual endowment, he seeks to relieve his conscience by some time-serving message; speaks, if at all, in flattering accents of the cross, and would quail before an anticipated frown or rebuke, should he faithfully speak of sin and of the judgment to come. In scenes like these, too, who looks for friendship for revivals of religion? Who is disappointed to find them regarded there as wildfire, fanaticism, and disorder? In the character, therefore, the habits, the manners, the inaccessibility of these large classes of a city population, is found the first obstacle to revivals of religion in a city, and is an obstacle which nothing but the mighty power of God can overcome.

II. A second great hinderance to revivals,

growing out of the nature of a city organization, arises from what may properly be called the want of *sympathy*, or *common ties* in such a community. It strikes a stranger as singular, that people separated only by the wall of a dwelling should be strangers to each other; and that in a dense and crowded population there should not be the strongest conceivable ties binding together man and man. Yet the estrangement and want of acquaintance are familiar; and it would not be difficult to explain it; but the fact itself is all that is needful to our purpose now. All know that neighbours are often strangers; and that the mere fact of worshipping in the same church edifice, or of sitting down at the table of the same Master, does not of necessity produce acquaintanceship, and create bonds of sympathy and love. Almost unavoidably, different ranks of life, even in the church, keep separate from each other; often there is a melancholy coldness and distance that is chilling to a stranger, or to a warm-hearted Christian; and while there may be, and usually is no *bad* feeling, and no root of bitterness, yet there is the want of that intimate acquaintanceship, and that strong common sympathy which Christ contemplated when he prayed for his disciples, "that they all might be one,"

and of that actual and active love which he contemplated when he commanded them to "love one another, as the Father had loved him," and which was so striking among the early Christians when the heathen persecutors were constrained to say, "Behold how these Christians love one another!"

Now revivals of religion are not caused by mere sympathy; but, as I have endeavoured in a former lecture to show, they call into action some of the most powerful and pervading sympathies of our nature. They are closely connected with the fact that God has grouped men together into families, circles of friendship, neighbourhoods, and churches. They are intimately connected with the fact, that when one part of the social circle is affected, either by joy or grief, the emotion kindles from heart to heart, and family to family, and circle to circle, until the whole community is pervaded by a common feeling. And where in a community there are, if I may so speak, independent *strata* of society, it often happens in a revival that one is affected and not another; where all have common sympathies and feelings, all partake of the common emotion. That this should be found in a country population where men are, in general, on the same level;

where every man knows his neighbour, and is accustomed to sympathize in all his wants, and woes, and joys; where difference of rank never separates them; and where the joy of conversion will strike a responsive chord throughout the community, is not to be wondered at. That such might not be the case in the population of a city, and especially in a city church, I shall not deny. I speak only of the *fact* as it actually exists.

I can never, while "life, and breath, and being last, or immortality endures," forget the time when God was pleased to bless my labours in a most remarkable and extensive revival of religion in a large country congregation. I had at its commencement some five hundred members of the church, and nearly five hundred families that were nominally connected with my charge, covering a region of country nearly ten miles in diameter. For more than a hundred years the Gospel had been faithfully preached there, and with eminent success. Revival after revival had crowned those labours; and since the days when God so blessed this land under the ministry of Whitefield, Edwards, and the Tennants, scarcely ten years had elapsed in which there had not been a revival there. At the time I speak of, a

simultaneous impression was produced, under the ordinary preaching of the Gospel. There was an unusual spirit of prayer; a deep anxiety on the part alike of the pastor and of the church members for the salvation of souls.

The emotions deepened, until the heart became full; and all in the community were willing to converse on the subject of religion. Scenes of amusement and pastime gradually gave way to the deep business of religion; no voice was raised in opposition; no noise, no disorder characterized the places where men had assembled to ponder the great question of their salvation. On all the community an influence had come down silent as the sun-beams, and gentle and refreshing as the dews of heaven. There was deep sympathy in all that community; a calm, subdued, serious, and holy spirit of conversation, which showed that the "God of peace" was there.

Who can doubt that if such a power were to descend on the population that occupies the same extent of territory here;—if the same heavenly influence should pervade the two hundred thousand here that pervaded the comparatively few hundreds there; and if the same deep enquiry were to exist here on the topics pertaining to our eternal welfare;—if the effects were to be seen in

closing the places of sinful amusement, in directing the steps of the guilty to the house of God, and in bringing out the lost and loathsome victims of crime, and lust and disease, to the light of heavenly day; and in filling the mansions of the rich and the gay with the sweet peace of religion, and of holy communion with God, who can doubt that such a scene would be in accordance with man's exalted nature, and would be a spectacle on which hovering angels would look with wonder, gratitude, and joy? But alas! tens of thousands here are far away from any such heavenly influence; thousands sneer at the name of revivals, and perhaps some hundreds of professed Christians would have no sympathy in such a work of grace.

III. I mention as a third obstacle resulting from the nature of a city organization, the fact that wickedness is concentrated, organized, and embodied there. If there is any peculiar guilt on earth, it will be found there. If there is any that can exist only by combination and alliance; any that depends on confederacy and organization; any that shrinks from the light of day, it would be found in the large capitals of the world. If there is any crime peculiarly dark, deep, offensive, loathsome in the sight of heaven, it will be found in such places. If Satan has any strong holds

which he fortifies with peculiar care, and guards with peculiar vigilance, they are the large cities of the world. In all ages they have constituted, as they do now, the principal obstructions to the spread of religion; and many, many a city has been doomed to destruction by God on account of its consummate wickedness, and because there was no other way to maintain his religion here below, than to sweep it with the besom of his wrath. So it was with the cities of the plain—in the time of Abraham, the principal barriers to the progress of righteousness, and the very *sewers* of iniquity. So it was with Babylon—the proud oppressor—doomed to ruin irretrievable and eternal, on account of its pride, cruelty, and opposition to God. So, as has already been remarked, Christ found the principal obstruction to *his* preaching in Chorazin, in Bethsaida, in Capernaum, and in Jerusalem. There was consummate wisdom in the plan of the builders of Babel, when they said, "Go to, let us build US A CITY and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. xi. 4); for the very object of building a city was to contravene the Divine purpose, and set God at defiance; as it would seem, almost, had been often the design in the great cities of the world.

Since that time, it would almost seem as if

the design for which they had been founded had been to concentrate evil, and oppose religion on the earth. Tacitus long since described Rome as the *colluvies gentium—the sink of nations*—a description, the truth of which no one will doubt who is familiar with his history, or that of Gibbon. Dr. Johnson in a similar manner characterized London.

> London! the needy villian's general home,
> The common sewer of Paris and of Rome!
> With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
> Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
>
> All that at home no more can beg or steal,
> Or like a gibbet better than a wheel;
> Hiss'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
> Their air, their dress, their politics import;
> Obsequious, artful, voluble and gay,
> On Britain's fond credulities they prey. LONDON.

That beautiful poet, too, who perhaps never erred in describing the characters and customs of men, or of society—Cowper, has told us what a city is in the following lines:

> Thither flow,
> As to a common and most noisome sewer,
> The dregs and feculence of every land.
> In cities, foul example in most minds
> Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds

In gross and pampered cities; sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievements of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst. TASK, B. 1.

On this fact, in regard to cities as they have always existed, it would be needless here to dwell. Beautiful as they often are—rich, splendid, magnificent; the home of refinement, of courtesy, and accomplishment; the seats of science, and the nurse of the arts; I add, too, with thankfulness to God, the home often of deep piety and rich and liberal-hearted benevolence; yet they are the home, also, of every kind of infamy, of all that is false and hollow, and of all that fascinates, allures, and corrupts the hearts of men. There are found men of all nations, colours, characters, opinions. There men of splendid talents live to corrupt by their example and their influence; there unbounded wealth is lavished to amuse, betray, and ruin the soul; there are the vortices

of business and of pleasure that engulf all; and there are the most degraded and the worst forms of human depravity.

I speak here particularly of sins of combination and alliance, of sins *so* allied and interlocked that nothing can meet and destroy them but the mighty power of God in a revival of religion; sins which stand peculiarly opposed to the prevalence of religion. The infidel in the country village usually stands almost alone. He may gather a few disciples; but their *character* usually testifies to the nature of the opinions held, and prevents the extension of the evil. In this land, a frowning public opinion usually rests on him and his doctrines. But in this city, he may make as many converts as he pleases; he may *always* find enough to gratify his vanity as a leader; always find enough to enable him to brave public opinion, and to keep him in countenance. The man of profaneness in the country village is usually almost alone: he mocks and curses his Maker with few to countenance him, and the burning *lens* of public indignation usually meets him wherever he goes. If he has a few companions *they* are known, and their known character is a sort of check on the extension of the profaneness. But not so in a city. If he chooses to curse his Maker, he can

do it when he pleases, and be sustained by as many as he chooses. If he prefers to do it on the wharfs and in the gutters, he will find enough there to countenance him; if he chooses to do it in the streets, alas! he may find a patron every where, and can scarce turn a corner without being greeted by a fellow-labourer in the work of cursing. If he prefers to think that it is an accomplishment for a gentleman, he will find gentlemen enough (so called) who will keep him in countenance. In the country village or neighbourhood the licentious young man is known; his character is understood, and he is usually a solitary monument of infamy. There is no organization for the purposes of licentiousness; the deed of wickedness is solitary, marked, hated. But what shall I say of a city—of all cities; Who can gauge this evil there, and report to us the estimate? Who can acquaint us with the organizations designed to promote impurity of life and licentiousness of morals? Who can take any accurate census of the actual number of abandoned females; who of this far greater number of abandoned men—young and old—who are living in gross violation of the laws of heaven? Every great metropolis of the world in this respect bears a striking resemblance to Sodom; and it is matter

of amazement that every great city does not meet its righteous doom. I might go over the whole catalogue of crimes that are marked on the calendar of human guilt, and we should find them all concentrated, organized, consolidated in our cities and large towns. There foul and offensive exhalations rise from the receptacles of human depravity; there volumes of curses roll up towards heaven; there the seducer practises his arts to inveigle the young; there tens of thousands riot in intemperance and curse their Maker; there multitudes practise all arts of fraud and infamy; and there Satan, knowing the power of cities in all the surrounding regions, has established his strong holds, and fortifies and guards his possessions with all that skill and art can do.

Now, it is not so much to affirm that the proportion of the wicked in cities is greater than in the country, that I have dwelt on this point; it is to fix the attention on two or three features of the fact directly bearing on the subject before us.

One is, that sin exists here in combination and alliance. It is not dissocial and solitary; it is united, and interlocked, and interwoven with numerous customs of society. The *point* of my remarks, therefore, is, that sin in cities presents

a solid front to the Gospel of Christ. It is kept in countenance. It resists the Gospel, confident that it *may* be resisted. Hence the necessity of revivals of religion. O what shall ever meet and destroy this combined and consolidated wickedness, but the power of the Spirit of God descending on the whole community in answer to the prayers of Christians, and inclining these ten thousand alienated hearts to seriousness and to God!

Another feature is, that the arrangements for sin in a city peculiarly contemplate the young. Well does the enemy of God know that the church looks to them for its increase. Its hopes are these; its prospects of purity, fervour, and of the final conquest of the world, are these. Cast an eye now over a city, and ask for whom are the institutions of sin, licentiousness, and intemperance designed? Who are to be the victims? Who is to sustain them? Not much care is shown to propitiate the aged. Age has few passions that can be excited; and it is either fixed in principle beyond the hope of being seduced to profligacy, or it is already corrupt and ruined. An old man must soon leave the stage of action, and, whether virtuous or vicious, his opinions cannot long influence the world. Not so the

young. There are passions in youth that may easily be enkindled; there are alluring arts that may readily be made to decoy them; and the wicked world looks to *them* to patronize and sustain them. Who is to sustain the numberless dram-shops licensed here under the authority of the laws in our city, and to license the future drunkards whose oaths and blasphemy are to roll up towards heaven? Our sons, if ten thousand arts of the tempter can break them away from the restraints of home, and can neutralize the effect of Sabbath-school instruction, and put back parental prayers unheard. Who are to be the patrons of the theatre? Your sons and daughters; and unless the love of pleasure can be implanted more than the love of God, soon might their doors be closed, to be opened no more. Thus every vice looks to the young for patronage; and ten thousand arts concentrate their influence to alienate the young from God, and to draw them down to death. Another feature is, the ease with which guilt here may be concealed. The most powerful protection of virtue in the country is public opinion, and the assurance that the guilty there cannot escape from it. An eye of public vigilance is on every man, and his character is known and understood. Not so here. The guilty

may flee away from every being but God, and practise his deeds of evil unknown. In a cellar, a garret, or a palace, at his pleasure, he may hide himself, and who can drag him out to the light of day? What is more, he may *so* conceal his guilt that his infamy shall not be suspected; or what is more and worse still, he may so combine with others as to modify public opinion, *and make virtue cease to blush when she gives him the hand.*

When one looks on these facts he will cease to wonder that cities have every where presented formidable obstacles to revivals of religion. One question I have to submit, in conclusion, to those who bear the name of Christian. It is, whether their hearts would feel any joy at a work of grace that should pervade all this population, and fill these streets and dwellings with seriousness and the fear of God? A heathen monarch of a much greater city than this, once rose up from his throne, and covered himself with sackcloth, and was followed by his court and nobles, and by all the people, in a solemn fast for three days. Who adjudges that the bosom of the king of Nineveh in this was swayed by any improper feeling? Another heathen monarch, at the head of two millions of men, sat down and wept. In an

hundred years, said he, all that mighty host will be dead. The vision of Xerxes extended no farther. He had no tear to shed over their doom beyond the grave. How different that feeling from the view which excited the Redeemer to weep! *His* tears fell because he could see beyond the tomb; because he saw the unending career of the never-dying soul; and knew what it was if the soul should be lost. And this multitude that we see in this city; this gay, busy, thoughtless, volatile, unthinking throng that sweep along these streets, or that dwell in these palaces, or that crowd these theatres or these assembly-rooms, where, O where, will they be in a hundred years? Dead—all dead. Every eye will have lost its lustre—every frame its vigour—every rose shall have faded from the cheek; the charms of music shall no more entrance the ear,—the fingers shall have forgotten the melody of the lute and the organ. Where will they be? In yonder heaven, or in yonder hell! Part—alas, how small a part! —with ears attuned to sweeter sounds, and with eyes radiant with immortal brilliancy, and with a frame braced with the vigour of never-dying youth: part—alas, how large a part!—in that world, a view of whose unutterable sufferings drew tears from the eyes of the Son of God!

Each man that dares to curse JEHOVAH on his throne; each victim of intemperance and lust; each wretch on which the eye fastens in the lowest form of humanity, has an immortal nature that shall live beyond the stars, and that shall survive when "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll!" The shadowy vale of death will soon be past, and the thoughtless and guilty throngs will be found amid the severe and awful scenes of eternal justice! Christian, pray, pray, O pray for a REVIVAL OF PURE RELIGION IN THE GUILTY CITIES OF OUR LAND!

SERMON VI.

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS IN REGARD TO REVIVALS.

"NOW WHILE PAUL WAITED FOR THEM AT ATHENS, HIS SPIRIT WAS STIRRED WITHIN HIM WHEN HE SAW THE CITY WHOLLY GIVEN TO IDOLATRY." Acts xvii. 16.

Two very opposite effects are produced on different minds by difficulties and embarrassments. One is to dispirit and dishearten, the other is to animate with augmented ardour and zeal. The former is the effect produced on the mass of mind; the latter is that produced on the few. The multitude become intimidated, and give over effort as hopeless; the few who are bold and resolute, who act from convictions of principle and conscience, or who see a prize worth exertion, are stimulated to greater efforts by every new difficulty, and develope resources of invention and talent before unknown to themselves, and surprising to their friends. This it is to be great; and this constitutes the real greatness of the few who have deserved and received the name.

The record of the visit of the Apostle Paul at Athens, furnishes an illustration of this principle; and I know not that a better one can be found. It was the first time when he had been there; but not the time when he first learned its fame. He himself had been born in a city whose schools rivalled those of Athens; and there is reason to think that at some period of his life he had been familiar with the more distinguished classic productions in the Greek language; and he was certainly not disqualified for appreciating the eloquence, and the elegant arts of that city.—Longinus thus speaks of Paul: "The following men are the boasts of all eloquence, and of Grecian genius, viz.: Demosthenes, Lysias, Æschines, Hyperides, Isæus, Anarchus, Isocrates, and Antiphon, *to whom may be added Paul of Tarsus,*" certainly qualified to appreciate what to a classic mind must have been interesting, nay, almost entrancing, in Athens. Her schools, her academic groves, her wonders of art, it might have been supposed, would have attracted the attention of such a mind. What an opportunity of examining for the first, and perhaps the last time, the immortal works of Phidias and Praxiteles! What an opportunity for mingling in the circles of the most refined society in the world! How vain

would it appear to be for such a stranger, a solitary and unknown man, to attempt to produce a change in the religious condition of that city, or to produce there a revival of religion!

The effect on his mind of a survey of the state of things there is described in my text. "His spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." The spirit of Paul was roused here, as it was every where, by the prevalence of sin, and he was led to put forth augmented efforts, in view of the very difficulties before him.

In this instance we have an illustration of the feelings which a Christian should cherish in the midst of a great city. They were feelings such as Paul himself cherished in the midst of gay and voluptuous Corinth, when he resolved that he would know nothing there save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; which he had in Ephesus, where he laboured so assiduously for the overthrow of idolatry, and for the conversion of its multitudes to God; and which he had in Antioch, in Philippi, and in Rome. I wish at this time, from the feelings thus manifested by Paul, to offer some remarks on the duties of Christians in cities and large towns, particularly with reference to revivals of religion; and I shall set my

views before you in a series of observations all bearing on this point, to show what Christians ought to do to promote revivals of religion in such places.

I. My first observation is, that religion first showed its power, and especially in revivals of religion, in cities and large towns. There the Gospel met every form of human wickedness, and showed its power to triumph over all. In Jerusalem, the seat of pharisaical pride and hypocrisy, and of dependence on the mere forms of religion; in Antioch, the rich and commercial emporium of Syria, and the seat of all the affluence and luxury that commerce produces; in Ephesus, the strongest hold of idolatry, and the place to which tens of thousands resorted to pay their worship at the shrine of the most splendid temple in the heathen world; in Philippi, long the capital of Macedonia, and filled with all the sins that usually pertain to court; in Corinth, the most gay, and voluptuous, and sensual, and dissipated city of the age—the Paris of antiquity; and in Rome itself, the capital of the world, and, like London, the common sewer of the nations; in all these places the Gospel showed its power, and achieved its earliest triumphs. In each of these, flourishing churches were established, and

in each one, under the apostolic preaching, were witnessed all the phenomena that characterize religion now.

It must continue to be so, till the whole world is converted to God. Cities are, and will be, the centres of moral power; and their influence must be felt over all other portions of the world. Missionaries now go to great cities just as the apostles did, and begin their work there. It is in such places as Constantinople, and Jerusalem, and Calcutta, and Canton, and Bankok, and Cairo, that the triumphs of the Gospel are expected; and to secure such places of influence is deemed as needful as it is for an invading army to seize upon the strong fortresses of a land. In our own country, therefore, and in other lands, Christians are to labour and pray now, as the apostles did, for the promotion of religion in cities and large towns.

II. My second remark is, that there is the same need of a revival of pure religion in these places, that there was in the cities that were visited by the apostles, and the same things to excite Christians to effort for their conversion which there was then. Were Paul to come now and visit this city, or any of the great cities of our land, as he did Athens, what would he find ?

What honour would he see put on God? What would he see to be the great and prevalent object of living? And what, with his recorded views of the character of men, and of the final destiny of the guilty, would he regard as the doom of the multitudes here? We may take this great city as a fair and favourable specimen of the character of the cities of our land. What would he find here? He would find indeed no idols, and no temples reared to false gods. Thanks to the God of our fathers, who directed hitherward the steps of men who feared his name, not an idol god has been made, nor an idol temple reared, since the white man first penetrated the forests of the new world; and amidst all the works of art in our cities, the chisel of the sculptor has never been employed to engrave a god of stone. But in this city he would find more than an hundred thousand people without any form or semblance of religion. They enter no sanctuary; they worship no God, true or false. They have not even gone so far as to rear, as the Athenians did, an altar "to the unknown God,"—the unknown God, amidst their rabble of divinities, who, they supposed, had come to save them from the pestilence. Along these streets the pestilence has also spread, perhaps in as frightful a form as

that described by Thucydides in Athens, and God, the true God, has interposed to save; but the multitude that were spared erected no altar to their unknown God to commemorate the event. He might go into some thousands of houses, and he would find no shrines, no Lares, no Penates, no form or mode of devotion. He would find their inmates devoted to *idols*, but idols without temples, save the temple of the heart. To Mammon or to Bacchus he might find them devoted, with an ardour never witnessed at Athens; but to these they have erected no altars. He would find many a splendid house where dwells a whole family with no form of devotion; who enter no sanctuary; who have no Sabbath except for amusement; who live as though it were not worth inquiry or argument whether there be a God and an eternity. He would find many who live to feast on the bounties of Providence without thanksgiving; who riot on the verge of the grave unalarmed; and who attend even their departed friends to the tomb with no more personal anxiety about their own preparation to die, than though the inscription made on the entrance to a cemetery in the capital of France during the revolution, "Death is an eternal sleep," were settled to be the truth, and ought to be inscribed over every

dwelling-place of the dead. But are they idolaters? As degrading, and often as sunken, as though they worshipped blocks of wood and stone, for they fix on other objects the affection due to God. Many even in this city have sunk to a depth of debasement to which the vilest form of idolatry rarely consigns its votaries; for even a *bad* religion has *some* restraints—irreligion has none. Part worship wealth, part fashion; part do homage to low and debasing pleasures. And amidst the idol worship of Athens there was not a more effectual exclusion of the true God from the soul, than there is from the hearts and habitations of tens of thousands in this city.

III. My third remark is, that it is chiefly on Christians that dependence can be placed to rouse the great and thoughtless multitudes of a city population to a sense of their guilt and danger. I say *chiefly;* for though we may hope something from the effects of the various dispensations of Providence in afflictions in arousing men; though we may rely somewhat on the fact that the consciences of men may be alarmed in view of their guilt and danger, and in the prospect of death; though we may hope that thoughtful inquiry may be aroused by the Divine Spirit in some minds without any visible means used; and though we

may hope that some of the great mass may from time to time become sick of the vain world, and in their disgust inquire whether there is not comfort to be found in religion; yet the main hope is, that Christians will use their influence to bear the truth to them, convince them of their danger and their folly, and direct them to the Lamb of God. I say *Christians*—meaning to include in this term the ministers of religion—with all the influence which can be derived from personal piety, learning, and eloquence, and all that can be derived from the respect which their office creates; other officers of the churches, with all the influence which their office creates, and with all that their private worth can add to their official influence; Sabbath-school teachers, with all the advantages which are furnished them from their access to the hearts of large numbers of the young; Christian parents, with all that there is of authority and tenderness in their relation to their children—all of which should be tributary to the Gospel; Christian physicians, with all the influence which they may have in the houses of the sick and the dying; Christian magistrates, with all the power of their office in restraining vice and recommending virtue; the aged with their ripe experience, the young with their ardour, and the middle-aged

with the maturity of their judgment; man with his energy and talent, and woman with her patience and tenderness in visiting the abodes of poverty and want. These constitute the reliance, under God, in promoting religion among the thoughtless masses of a city population. They are the enrolled, the disciplined, and the officered army which has been appointed here to fight the battles of the Lord. This constitutes the organization for all that is lovely and of good report against the numerous organizations for evil in a city like this: and this is what the Saviour employs in the great work of securing for himself those centres of influence and power. They can feel, and should feel for the condition of those around them. They have influence and power given them for this end by the Head of the church. In Athens, Paul was probably the only man who had any just view of the guilt and danger of the multitudes that thronged the streets of that city; the only man that had any just view of God, and any knowledge of the plan of redemption; and the only hope of rousing that vast population of idolaters rested on the voice of this solitary stranger, a man unknown and without influence, or if known, despised. It is not so here.

God has placed here more than twenty thousand, all of whom, according to their professions, should have the same feelings as Paul had in Athens. They profess the same religion; they worship the same God; they have, or should have, the same views of the guilt and danger of man, and of the necessity to be prepared to meet God. They are each one in possession of the same knowledge of the plan of salvation, and of the same hope of heaven; and there is not one of them, old or young, who is not, or should not be able to tell his neighbour the way by which he might be made everlastingly happy. Every parent can tell this to his children; and every Sabbath-school teacher to his scholars; and every man to his neighbour, to the poor, to the outcast, and to the vile. And how obvious it is, that, in the possession of this knowledge, it is their duty to seek that the whole population should be pervaded with Christian influence, or that there should be a revival of religion spreading throughout this entire community! It is as if the pestilence had come in upon the whole population, and was cutting off the inhabitants at a fearful rate every day, and God has entrusted to twenty thousand the knowledge of one infallible remedy for the disease. Who would

feel himself blameless if a single one should die by his neglecting to communicate a knowledge of that remedy?

IV. My fourth observation is, that in cities and large towns Christians are exposed to peculiar temptations and dangers.

Temptations to unfaithfulness exist everywhere. The country village has its temptations, and the city has its own. Which are the greatest, it is not needful now to inquire. The only point of inquiry before us here is, what dangers beset Christians in cities and large towns? Especially what dangers in regard to the direct efforts for the promotion of religion? What is there to chill and paralyze our efforts in reference to the cause of revivals?

There are many; and to show the nature of all these temptations and dangers fully, would far transcend the proper limits of a whole discourse, and can here only be glanced at. They are such as the following:

I. The danger of soon being discouraged by the magnitude of the evils around us. They are so numerous, and they pertain to so many subjects, and they are so fortified by prevalent customs, that the spirit of Christians soon sinks and faints within them. To rouse a city—to promote

a reformation there—to secure a general revival of religion, seems like an attempt to lade out the ocean, or like an effort to remove quicksand where it fills in as fast as you remove it.

II. We become familiar with the evils, and cease to feel appalled by their magnitude. A warm-hearted Christian on going to Paris is shocked and pained at the gaiety and licentiousness there; a Christian from the country is shocked at the amount of sin in a great city, and pained at the condition of its thoughtless thousands; a young convert, just from his first view of the cross, and of the dying Saviour, and with his vivid conceptions of the worth of the soul, weeps over the condition of the tens of thousands around him, and feels, like young Melancthon, that he can persuade them all to turn to God. But how soon, as a general rule, does your stranger Christian in Paris, and he that comes to us from the country, and the young convert, lose all this ardour! these thousands we see walk the streets almost forgetting that they have souls. The young and the accomplished we see crowd the abodes of fashion, and we seem to forget that for them Christ died, or that there can be for such gay and happy throngs any such places as a sick bed or a grave; the rich we see roll along in

splendour, and cease to feel almost that there is a God before whom they must appear, and a hell where the rich man that is impenitent will lift up his eyes in torment; and soon we sleep as calmly in our beds as though all this multitude were on the way to heaven.

III. We are appalled by the fact that evils are *combined* and *confederated*, and that it seems almost hopeless to attempt to break them up. It is not that you have to meet an army of profane men, and that when they are reformed the field is clear, and the victory gained. It is not that you must meet a host of Sabbath-breakers, and that when they are restrained the victory is won. It is not that we must ferret out and reform some thousands of the impure and licentious, and that then the work is done. It is not that you must vanquish an army of atheists, and infidels and scoffers, and that when you have convinced them of the truth of Christianity the task is completed. Nor is it that you must meet with fashion, and vanity, and the love of the world, and substitute for all this the love of God. The difficulty is, that THEY ARE ALL IN THE FIELD TOGETHER. They are parts of one great army—the army of the foe of God; they are under the control of one master mind—the great apostate spirit—that

marshals them for his war against virtue and against God; and unless *all* are driven from the field the victory cannot be won; and seeing this, Christians soon become disheartened. Connected with this is the fact that sins are interlocked and confederated together. They never appear alone. You cannot meet one form of evil by itself, and destroy it as if it were alone. When, for example, you make war on intemperance, it is not on intemperance alone. It is a war at the same time on avarice and covetousness, and on all the forms of traffic and of business by which it is sustained, and on all the customs and vices that walk in the train of intemperance. You make war on profaneness, and licentiousness, and Sabbath-breaking, and the theatre, and on the love of money in some of its worst forms, more than half of all which evils are connected with indulgence in intoxicating liquors. How long could a theatre be sustained if intoxicating drinks were not accessible? How few, comparatively, would be profane if they were never excited by intoxicating drinks? And how closely connected are intemperance and licentiousness everywhere? Attack one form of sin anywhere, and you attack a host of affiliated vices, and all their friends are roused to oppose you. Cicero long since remarked that

there was a "common bond" among the virtues. They are united—a family of sisters—always strengthening each other—always found in each other's company, and always diffusing around smiles and joy. They are like a *parterre* of commingled flowers, when you breathe the fragrance emitted by them all. And so there is a common bond among vices. They are of one family, of one bad parentage. When you meet with one you may be sure that others are not far off—not, indeed, a family harmonious and happy, like the virtues, but still united and associated. You cannot meet one without rousing up all; and hence the difficulty everywhere of putting down vice and promoting a reformation, and hence the friends of virtue become intimidated and appalled.

IV. A fourth danger in cities is, that of conformity to the evil customs that prevail around us. I do not mean that Christians, whom God has set in cities to carry forward his work and to save souls, fall into open sin; but I refer to what the Bible calls "conformity to the world." There is a great deal of piety in the world—in the main connected with honest intentions—that is like the chameleon, taking its hue from surrounding objects. Or I may use, perhaps, a better illustration. It is like a precious gem set in foil. The

jeweller spreads beneath it a coloured substance, and the gem partakes of that colour. It sparkles and is beautiful. It has an original beauty, but its peculiar hue is borrowed from the foreign substance in which it is embedded. Not a little of the religion of this world is like this gem. It is genuine, and in itself beautiful and valuable; but it borrows its appearance from the things around it, and when the *setting* happens to be bad, the whole brilliancy is gone, and the beauty disappears. In a high state of religious feeling in a church, or in a time of revival, that religion sparkles like the diamond. When the Christian church is roused to seek the salvation of the world —when a pure love flows from heart to heart— when all are engaged in promoting the salvation of sinners, then it shines brilliant as a gem of the purest water. But when the church slumbers, and its zeal languishes, and iniquity abounds, then it is a precious stone badly set, and the dark foil dims all its lustre and mars all its beauty. It requires a high order of religion *not* to be conformed to the world. We are with the people of this world; we transact business with them; we converse with them; we are invited to partake with them of the pleasures in which they find their only enjoyment; we mingle with them in

the social circle; we "catch the manners living as they rise," and we suffer the world of vanity and fashion to give us laws about the style of living, and conversation, and dress, and amusement. Piety that would have shone with the brilliancy of the diamond in the persecution of Nero or of Mary, may be dull and dim while the world caresses or flatters; and zeal, that would beam like that of a seraph were the whole church alive to God, sinks away into a flickering and almost expiring flame when the church slumbers. In no place does the world have such influence over Christians—or rather, perhaps, I ought to say, in no place is there so much danger of the influence—as in cities. In such places, eminently, "iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold."

V. Connected with this is a fifth danger, in regard to the mass of Christians. It is seen in a disposition to palliate sin, or to apologize for it, or to speak of it in a language that shall not imply reproof. The nomenclature of sins, like that of chemistry, is often changed; and the characteristics of an age can often be determined by the appellations given to vice. An age of great refinement — the golden or tinsel age of society—is often characterized by great fastidious-

ness and great delicacy; in plainer language, great *prudishness*. Crimes change names; faults are apologized for under names that border on virtue; and words which suggest the idea of *sin* or *wrong*, are exchanged for names that suggest any thing but the thing referred to; and so the gay and the Christian world together "wrap it up." When iniquity abounds—when it goes up into places of affluence and rank, the world demands the language of gentleness and apology. "Prophesy unto us smooth things" becomes the common wish: and the kind of reproof, and fidelity in preaching, where things are called by their right names, and where the iniquity of the heart is laid open, and men are warned with appropriate earnestness to flee from the wrath to come, is set down as fanaticism and extravagance. How difficult it is to reach some far-pervading sins in the community, sins that endanger the salvation of thousands in all our cities; and how difficult to rouse Christians to a sense of their existence, or the dangers that attend their indulgence!

I had hoped to have had time to speak of other dangers of the members of the churches in regard to the promotion of religion in our cities, arising from the love of gain; from the temptations to neglect secret prayer; from the tendencies to ne-

glect the careful study of the Bible; from the fact that the impressions made by preaching are so soon obliterated from the mind by business and the influence of the world; and I would have spoken also of the difficulties of promoting religion, from the organized resistances, and from the want of the kind of social influences that prevail in country neighbourhoods and villages. But I have already trenched much on the time that should have been allotted to what was designed to be the leading purpose of this discourse. That remains to be considered; and a few brief hints must now be all.

It is, the duties of Christians in cities in regard to the promotion of revivals of religion. They are such as the following:

I. To form and cherish just views about the possibility, the desirableness, and the importance of revivals of religion here. It is not too much to suppose that large numbers of professing Christians in the different churches have no definite views on these points. They have never made them a matter of distinct thought or inquiry. They have never gone to the New Testament to find out what was *done* in the time of the Saviour and the apostles, and what was said about the possibility and the value of such works of

grace. Perhaps many have obtained all the views which they have ever had of such works of grace from the observation of foreign tourists, or from the tone of the worldly society around them. And it is to be feared that not a few professing Christians in all churches in cities regard, at heart, revivals of religion as of doubtful value, or as scenes of wild-fire and fanaticism. Is it uncharitable to ask how many Christians there are in any of our churches that would stand up amidst the rich and the gay, in the brilliant circles where they are sometimes found, as the firm advocates of revivals of religion if they were attacked? Are there not many that would concede all that the sceptical or the scoffing opponent would desire to have conceded? Now it is much, it is every thing, when Christians intelligently, and on settled grounds, believe in the value and existence of revivals of religion; when they have so examined the subject, so read the New Testament, and so made it a matter of prayer, as to see that, in the estimation of the Redeemer, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the world, in powerful revivals of religion, was to be the triumph of his work, and a blessing worth the self-denials and toils of this life, and his unspeakable agonies on the cross. Such a feeling in the churches is

usually a precursor of such a work of grace; and we cannot hope for such descending influences on our cities until Christians shall think as the Saviour thought, and feel as the Saviour felt. This is the great thing now needed among Christians; and that day which shall convince all, or the great body of professing Christians in cities, of the reality and desirableness of revivals of religion, will constitute a new era in the history of religion, and will precede the manifestations of the power of God like that on the day of Pentecost.

II. For the promotion of religion in places like this, Christians should be firm and settled in the principles of religion. There should be no yielding of principle, no improper compliance, with the customs around us. Our views of religion should be drawn from the Bible, and not from the books which uninspired men have written, or from the views which the gay and fashionable, the rich and vain, and even the literary and scientific world may entertain of religion and its duties. Literature and science, poetry and the arts, are to be allowed no more to give us our views of religion than gaiety and fashion. From the Holy Bible—the unerring word of the living God—Christians are to derive their views of the

nature of religion. There we are to go to learn what the soul is worth; what it cost to redeem it; what is its condition as it comes into the world; what is the state of man by nature; what dangers beset him; why man is placed on the earth, and for what objects Christians are to live. Fresh with the views drawn from the living fountains of truth, what estimate should we form of the multitudes around us?—what but that they are lost, ruined, dying, and that every thing should be done that can be done for their salvation? And when we have drunk deep at that living fountain, what views should we derive of the duty of Christians here? That they should be every where the firm and unwavering friends of God; the advocates of truth and holiness; the rebukers of sin by their lips and by their lives; and the labourers in the vineyard of their Lord to save souls from death. On all the questions that divide the religious from the irreligious world, the Christian should have settled views, and should abide by them, come contempt, or cursing, or flame. There should be no vacillating, no wavering; no taking sides with the foes of the Redeemer; no yielding a point which the Redeemer would not yield. In the great questions pertaining to the new birth and the atonement; to revivals of religion and to

missions; to temperance, chastity, and the Sabbath; to the spread of the Bible and to Sabbath-schools; in regard to the theatre, the ball room, and the splendid gaiety and folly, there *ought* to be singleness and uniformity of opinion and conduct among the friends of the Redeemer. It ought to be known where each friend of Christ could be found. There ought to be the same views and feelings which the Redeemer would have; the same course of life which he would advise and recommend. Is it so? So far from it, that you can hardly go into a promiscuous assemblage of professed Christians without finding on many of the most important of these points as many different views as there are different minds; and so far from it that you cannot calculate on the efficient and harmonious co-operation of any considerable portion of such a group to put down any one of these evils. So it ought not to be; so it was not in the days of apostolic decision and independence in religion.

III. It is the duty of Christians to provide means for the religious instruction of the masses of mind that are thrown together in cities, the means of bringing all under Christian influence. Just now, not very far from one half of the population in all our cities would be excluded from

places of worship, should they be disposed to attend, for the absolute want of room. Now it is in the *power* of the various denominations of Christians in this city, and in other cities, to provide ample accommodation for all the population that could attend on public worship. It is in their power to get all the wandering and neglected children into Sabbath-schools. It is in their power to place a Bible in every family. It is in their power to keep up prayer-meetings, and other religious services, in every lane and alley where it would be desirable. It is in the power of Christians, aided by what they might depend on in other classes of the community favourable to morals, to close the thousands of dram-shops and low taverns that infest us. What can be done should be done; and I am saying only that which all men will admit to be well-founded, when I say that all these things *should* be done in this city, and *when* done we might look for a general revival of religion.

IV. It is the duty of Christians in a city, as every where, but principally here, to bring the influence of religion to bear on the members of their families. We look abroad, but let us also look at home. If we wish a revival of religion, it must be sought in our own hearts; in our own

dwellings. Whatever there is in our hearts that grieves the Holy Spirit of God should be removed, and what there is we may easily know. If we have forgotten our first love; if we have laid aside the simplicity of our confidence in the Lord Jesus; if we have neglected prayer; if our secret devotions are cold, formal, heartless, often intermitted; if we are seeking the world, its wealth, its pleasures, its honours; if we have become rich, and at the same time proud and self-confident; if avarice has grown as covetousness has been gratified; and if for our families we are seeking the world rather than heaven, it is time for us to pause, and to retrace our steps, and with penitent hearts to begin life anew. These things hinder religion; these things prevent revivals. And whatever there is in our families that grieves the Spirit of God should be laid aside. The God that sees all knows what that may be. If family devotion is cold and formal, or is not maintained at all; if the love of dress, and vanity, and parties of pleasure, and the gaieties of the world have seized upon the minds of our children, and if we feel that they must be indulged; these, then, are things that prevent religion: these the things that shut the heavenly influences from our dwellings, and from the city of our habitation.

V. There should be prayer for a revival of religion; prayer distinctly and definitely for that. O could twenty thousand Christians in this city unite in that one supplication, "O LORD REVIVE THY WORK," would not the ear of God be open to their cry? When shall this be? When shall the time come that we can feel that such a prayer ascends to God from the hearts of the thousands of his professed friends in a city like this? This, brethren, is what we need; the spirit of that ancient man that wrestled till the break of day, saying, "I cannot let thee go except thou bless me;" the spirit of that prophet of the Lord, who in the name of the church said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Isaiah lxii. 1.

Christians, God has placed you in this city to do good—to show the power of his Gospel—to promote religion. What are the prospects of the immortal souls around you? Where will they soon be? Soon they and you will be together at the bar of God. You will meet when the gaieties of life shall have died away; when fashion and wealth shall have lost their glitter; when the eter-

nal doom of the soul is to be pronounced; and when *your* chief joy then will be found in the reflection that you have done as much AS POSSIBLE FOR THEIR SALVATION.

If religion is to be revived, it is to begin at the house of God. There are the hopes of man in regard to his immortal welfare. There is not a vice in this city that might not be crippled or destroyed if every Christian had the burning zeal of Paul. Christians should drink anew of the fountain of the waters of life. Time was, in the days of the martyrs, when a female, trained in the refinements of the Roman capital, would not throw a grain of incense on a pagan altar to save her body from the flames. O come those times again; times when all who bear the Christian name shall, with such firmness, resist all the forms of sin. Come those times when every Christian, dead to the world but alive unto God, shall resist sin, if need be, "even unto blood," and when he shall labour and pray unceasingly FOR A REVIVAL OF PURE RELIGION!

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